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Music and Letters

JULY, 1927.

VOLUME VIII No. 3

THE CHORAL WRITING IN THE MISSA SOLENNIS

ALMOST every writer on the Missa Solennis speaks of Beethoven's inability to write for the human voice, of his callous disregard for vocal limitations and his lack of knowledge of choral effect. Preparation of choral forces for a pre-war performance made me think the same, and memories of a war-time hearing of the work from another choir, when the voices of the sopranos resembled the old lutes Thomas Mace described as "poor, cracked, battered things," produced only pain and a disinclination to listen to it again. But a recent long series of rehearsals and a centenary performance have induced me to take up the cudgels in Beethoven's defence with a view to inducing my fellow conductors to modify their views on the matter, even if I cannot influence historians and commentators who take their opinion second-hand and merely copy from other sources, with perhaps a cursory glance at a few offending pages to refresh their memory.

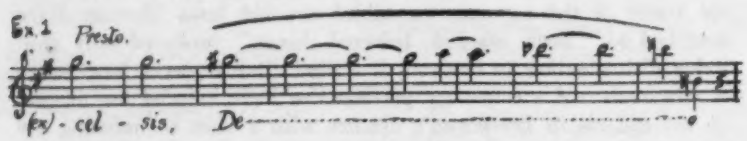
A writ for misdemeanour in three grades of seriousness against the soprano line may justly be delivered to Beethoven.

In the *third class* may be put the long G on page 26 (all references are to Novello's vocal score), its companions on pages 90 and 91 and at the foot of page 103. These are not very serious assaults on the endurance of his singers; would that no modern composer were guilty of more!
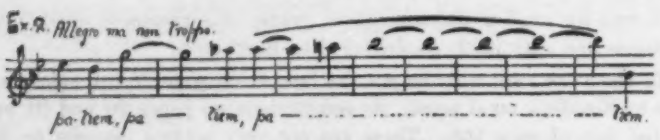
In the *second class* may be cited the long-sustained A's on page 87, the total of two lines on page 50, the A on page 52, the Amens and the seven bars of G and G sharp with words assigned to them, on page 53 (a much greater trial than vocalised high passages), the bottom line of page 74, and the first "et vitam" on page 91. While these are not commendable, they are not totally condemnable. I shall return to them later.

No advocate could be fee-ed to defend the prisoner in the dock on the indictments of the *first class*—the second bar of page 31,

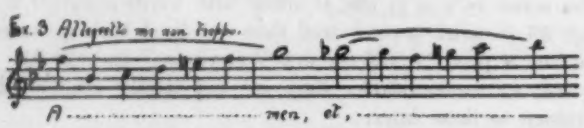
the last two bars of the top line of page 54, the middle line of page 57, the last phrase of the second line and the first bar of the third line of page 60, bars 1, 6, 7 of page 64, the second line of page 81, the entry of the fugue subject on pages 84 and 87, and the foot of page 92. These are certainly crimes of the worst malignity, and few choralists can attempt the most severe of them without physical suffering. They are chiefly due to Beethoven's ignorance of one of the fundamental principles of vocal writing (a lack of knowledge shared by not a few modern composers)—that actual compass is a small matter compared with the way in which high registers are treated, that upper notes may be easily reached and maintained for a reasonable time if approach is on certain lines, that remaining on dizzy heights for any long period is exhausting, and that the pronunciation of words in exalted altitudes is the cruellest task that can be set a singer. Some of the worst examples in this first class could be mitigated without injustice to Beethoven's intentions. For example, the last line of page 53 and the first of page 54 could be sung as follows :—



The speed would enable the lengthy " Deo " to be carried through. Bars 2-9, page 57, might be sung thus :—



The first bar of the last line of page 60 would not lose greatly by being sung an octave lower. The last bar of page 86 and the first two of page 87 might be altered to :—



The importance assigned to " et " is a small matter. (I shall deal

later with Beethoven's treatment of words.) At the foot of page 92 the following might be sung :—



The most cruel example of all, page 31, needs a drastic cure, reducing the text to nonsense, but only on paper, as one can never distinguish the words in actual performance :—



The other voices supply the complete text. These alterations would not make the soprano line easy, but they would relieve much of its strain, they would keep the voices fresher for the remainder of the work, and would lesson the tension usually felt by listeners. Even the most rabid purist could scarcely object to some of them.

Of the 148 pages of the vocal score only a total of about two pages come into the third class, four into the second, and two into the first. When an unsuccessful performance is heard, the listener is probably of opinion that the proportion of unreasonable to reasonable writing is immensely greater. They are more trying at rehearsal than at actual performance, because most of them occur in passages which must be repeated frequently, and because the conductor wishes to steel his forces into a state of endurance which will cope with them. The writer found that the policy of telling the sopranos not to bother to sing them at rehearsal (but to think them, or to sing them in part, or softly) resulted in lack of fear when the performance came. The excitement of the moment carried the singers over the obstacles with a minimum of effort and of apparent strain.

Even the severest critic of Beethoven's callousness must acknowledge that it would be a great loss to surrender some of the overwhelming effects produced by these heroic measures. The exaltation of such supreme climaxes such as " pater omnipotens," page 24, " solus altissimus," page 37, the Amens, pages 50 and 52, " in coelum," page 74, " saeculi, Amen," pages 90-92, the final " in

excelsis " of the " Osanna," page 103, and the tremendous power of the ascending passage, " in excelsis Deo," pages 53 and 54, could not have been produced by any other means, and they all belong to the third and second classes. The brilliance of a high soprano line has no rival jewel in the regalia of chorus and orchestra.

The next most heinous misdemeanours are against the basses. The last two bars of page 14 and the first of page 15, the beginning of the second line of page 18, the first two bars of page 33, the close of page 53 and the beginning of page 54, the beginning of the last " descendit " on page 64, the foot of page 74 and of page 91, the last three bars of the " Pleni sunt coeli " and of the " Osanna," pages 101-103, and the penultimate line of the latter, are trying to all but high baritones. But here the case is not serious. There are relatively few moderately low basses in choral societies to-day, and the quality of baritones in the upper extremes tells so vividly through the choral and orchestral mass of tone that the occasional silence of the deeper voices at these places, amounting in all to about 35 bars, is a small loss. Unfortunately, the tradition of having all hands always on deck dies hard in our choral flotillas; few conductors have the courage to order part of the crew below during critical periods, and few amateur singers are sufficiently self-denying to condescend to obey orders under such conditions. They prefer to bluster like a gale at all hazards.

When we come to examine the alto and tenor lines we find to our surprise that they have no vocally-trying passages at all! No witness can honestly come forward with a single piece of evidence against the prisoner at the bar. Our madrigalists and Bach demand much more from tenors than does Beethoven.

Of miscalculations there are not a few. The tenor lead at the end of page 44 is the most difficult to negotiate in all classical choral music. The low entries of the initial note of the fugue subject in the stretto on page 45 are ineffective, and there are no voices free from whom we may borrow to reinforce. The abrupt ending of bar 2, line 2, page 56, in the bass, never sounds right. The tenors become inaudible during bars 2 and 3 of page 87. Bach would have sacrificed an exact entry of the subject to produce a resplendent splash of colour, and would have made his singers leap to high A at the beginning of the second bar. The position of the tenors below the basses from the second to the fifth bar of page 135 produces only muddiness. The clashing of the orchestral and vocal lines in the " Osanna," page 102, is not agreeable, particularly at the opening. The lovely blurrings between voices and orchestra often introduced by Bach (cf. the last chorus of the " Matthew Passion ") and those between wind or brass and strings so beloved by Mozart, stand in a

different category. They were the outcome of a peculiarly sensitive flair for colour and a lifelong practical experience of the forces used. The downward leaps on " dona " given to the tenors and basses on page 133, line 2, are not happy examples of vocal writing. They are difficult to achieve satisfactorily in themselves, and ineffective in performance. The "Amen " quaver passages of pages 88 and 89, assigned to all voices, are a miscalculation. They never produce the effect one desires. This is due to two factors, the slight changes in the various versions, awkward to memorise and absorbing the singers' energies so much that fullness of tone is lost and the beat is not watched, and the troublesome tying of the last quaver of a group to the first of the next. Were the last quavers tied in all cases these passages would be much easier, but the niggling changes cramp the freedom of the singers. It is well to practise them first in this way :—



After they are thoroughly familiar take them as they are written. They would sound much more brilliant in actual performance if sung thus :—



The loss caused by the elimination of the theoretical stress on the tied quavers would be balanced by gain in power and clearness. In actual practice the numerous syncopated accents are almost impossible to achieve, and the counterpoint merely sounds confused. The passages belong to the realm of piano technique and not to that of vocal. The runs for soprano and alto, last line, page 89, can be sung without trouble; their sequential structure makes them easy.

One serious flaw is the almost entire neglect of the fine effect of choral tone released from the orchestra. Beethoven's experience of choirs was almost entirely confined to those in opera and in the masses of Haydn, Mozart, and their contemporaries. One may doubt whether he was in the least familiar with a cappella singing. The fugitive unaccompanied passages which do occur make one long for more. The beautiful effect of the soft sustained chords in the opening number, one bridging the " Christe " with the second " Kyrie," the other closing

the latter, occur too early in the Mass to produce their full effect. The three upper voices poised above the instrumental bass in the last bar of page 38 almost belong to the category. There are three brief beats at the end of page 45. The shout at the end of the " Gloria," page 55, almost sounds in performance like an error. The quasi-modal " Et resurrexit tertia dei secundum scripturas," page 74, is a superb passage. Equally fine at the other end of the gamut is the whispered "Agnus Dei," which heralds the " Dona nobis pacem," page 124. But these are all. There are two passages for quartet, pages 114 and 133, but the effect of a group of soloists (often unequally mated) is a poor thing compared with the infinitely expressive tone of a large chorus. One final point in this brief catalogue of miscalculations: I may be a heretic, or I may be unable to grasp the composer's idea, but the final page always appears to me an unsatisfactory ending for such a great work. In his instrumental works Beethoven nearly always contrived some master-stroke with which to conclude, but the final fragmentary four bars of the chorus, saying nothing new, and the scrappy irrelevant orchestral coda, make one wonder whether he grew weary at last of his titanic labours and penned the closing section perfunctorily. What would we not give for a conclusion such as he wrote for the " Kyrie " or for the " Credo," with both groups of his forces occupied in perfect unity to the end?

Now let us examine the other side of the picture. The position the Mass in D holds in the history of choral writing has rarely been acknowledged. To compare the technique of the Masses of Haydn and Mozart, or even the " Creation " and the Requiem Mass with the Missa Solennis, is to pit that of a Haydn or early Mozart String Quartet against Beethoven's Opus 131. We step from an old to a new world; we have crossed not merely from one century into another, but have passed into an entirely new era of thought. Since the middle of the eighteenth century choral writing had been conventional, and only certain qualities of the singers had been utilised. The vivid personality given by Bach to the chorus had been forgotten. Beethoven did not know it, and had to fashion his Galatea and breathe life into her without the aid of the gods. The tremendous force of his craving for expression created a new choral being. The Polyphonic school, the Bach and Handel styles, the Haydn and Mozart conventions were only as remotely related to the Missa Solennis as are the divergent peoples of East and West, of far North and far South, to each other.

For the first time since the days of the then-forgotten Bach the chorus attained a striking and many-sided personality of its own; it owed practically nothing to its ancestors of less than a hundred years back. The Missa Solennis inaugurated a new

era in choral writing. While it has been performed comparatively seldom, it has undoubtedly been studied, and shares with the writings of Bach the parentage of most of the important choral works which have followed the post-Mendelssohn period. Even now, after more than a century has passed, it remains a quarry from which composers may hew blocks to fashion anew. Beethoven demanded an intelligence and a technique which even few of the numerous fine choirs to-day can aspire to. Take, for example, the question of the innumerable *sforzandi*. Was ever choral work so besprinkled with these exacting signs? One occurs on the very first page. Page 78, to open the vocal score at random, contains twenty-eight, page 91 fifteen. Not one can be neglected without a dimming of that superhuman fire which blazes for page after page until it kindles even the most sluggish into exaltation. To take another point: there are many examples of subtle spacing of chords showing a new choral technique; they anticipate Wagner's methods of orchestral scoring. A few minutes' detailed examination of the opening pages will reveal many successful experiments.

It is not the object of this essay to discuss the actual value of the music. That must be left to abler pens than mine: I can only speak here of the choral writing pure and simple, and can only mention a few points. The very first lines reveal new things. The first "Kyrie," a long-sustained *f* ending in a sudden *p*, its second version with the alto and soprano thrown upward, and *sf* added to make it more striking, and the third crash, *ff* this time, with the upper two voices, thrown yet higher, along with a higher tenor, all three forming a strong dissonance with the pedal bass (note also the magnificent effect of the additional upward thrust of the inner voices at the beginning of the second bar of page 2), make one of the finest openings of any choral work. At the outset we are compelled to study the characteristic relation of text to music. As an instrumental composer thinking in large terms Beethoven troubled little with details of words. Of word-painting there are doubtless many examples, mostly of the type conventional in settings of the Mass, though carried out to a degree undreamt of by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. These need not be enumerated. But his general plan of campaign was to aim at the spirit of the text, and use the words as a mere means of providing his choir with something to carry out his conception as a whole. The sudden pianos at the end of the three cries just quoted have no connection with the text as such, but are factors in the scheme as a whole. Over and over again words are wrenched into fantastic shapes, *sforzandi* are decreed which the details of the text do not demand, and which may seem absurd when examined individually, and alterations of force are employed which

at the moment are apparently uncalled for. Two examples out of many may be pointed out in the treatment of " et " at the top of page 58 and in the second line of page 59. But when the conception as a whole is grasped it is seen that these innumerable details are all moving to one end, that of interpreting the general sense of the text in the broadest and most impressive manner. Especially when viewed in the light of Bach's methods and those of Beethoven's successors, one may be inclined to cavil at times at the treatment of the text, but approached from his standpoint the results justify the means and one receives an impression much more overwhelming than that which would be produced by meticulous scanning of every literary detail. The reservation must undoubtedly be made that Beethoven's ignorance of the subtleties of vocalism and of the means of securing vocal ease and increasing the effectiveness of his lines by the fullest consideration of their individualities brings about in many cases a loss of the fullest possible results from his chorus. But we do not condemn his piano music because much of it would be easier to play and more sensuously effective if it had been rewritten by Chopin. They are small flaws in a colossal conception, mere roughnesses and inequalities on the surface of an immense bronze statue. If conductors and choralists understand the principle of Beethoven's attitude towards his text few choral works can drive home their spiritual messages with such irresistible conviction as the Missa Solennis.

In the " Christe Eleison " the reiterated " Christe " to falling minims with cross accents, the high alto E, line 2, bar 2, page 6, are reminiscent of Bach. In the " Gloria " the whispered " suscipe deprecationem nostram " and " miserere nobis," pages 29-32, is an effect only achievable by a large chorus, while the tremendous " miserere nobis," on page 34, hurled out with all conceivable vehemence and tailed off by the wonderful diminuendo, stands like an impregnable rock, which by some magic power has been endowed with human feelings. It is true that a composer intimate with the possibilities of a choir would have put the altos up to C sharp and the tenors to A. On the next page comes the long crescendo on " nobis," with the diminuendo carefully marked by an unusual notation to begin on the last quarter of the first bar of the bottom line. The placing of the voices, which gives the mass of deep tone underneath the more agonised cry of the quartet, is masterly. The >< on the sustained chord to preface the massive abundantly-stressed fugue subject was, so far as I know, an innovation in choral writing. The first five pages of the fugue, in spite of some awkward moments in individual lines, are as effective a piece of great contrapuntal writing as may be found anywhere. Especially thrilling are the upward

sweeps and descents in line 2, page 41. The glory of the high soprano and alto tone is exalting. The wonderful building up of page 46 to the high B of the sopranos is only weakened by the ineffective restriction of the tenor line to its lower compass. It does not take its share in the general exultation. Perhaps it would be a good thing to add a contingent of baritones from the second bar onwards. The effect of the last E of the altos just gives the necessary touch of brilliance to sustain interest to the *poco più allegro*. Unique also are the slow passages for the choir which support the animated movement of the quartet, pages 47 and 48, and the crisp cutting unison " cum sancto spiritu " at the foot of the next page. An experienced choral writer would have begun the crescendo a bar earlier in order to allow a more convincing impetus to the forte of the next page. The apparently uncalled-for alternations of *f* and *p* at the foot of page 51 produce an electric effect when well managed.

Many writers have called attention to the violent hammering out, over and over again, of the initial word of the " Credo," a purely choral effect producing the sensation of immense joy in the ability to believe in the many doctrines of the creed. The sudden hush and the low-placed voices at " ante omnia saecula " brings an indescribable feeling of awe into the tremendous rejoicing of this declaration of unshakable faith. Another highly effective piece of fugal writing is the " consubstantialem patri," page 60, *et seq.* (made more impressive in performance by being taken at a slightly slower pace than the sections before and after). Beethoven's afterthought to assign the mysterious modal melody, " Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto," page 65, to the chorus tenors instead of to the soloist, resulted in one of the most awe-inspiring moments in the entire work. Beautiful as the music is, much of the mystery would have been lost had it remained in the solo line, or had the chorus tenors been replaced by basses. The colour of the low-placed voices is exactly what is needed. Another most impressive moment is the murmured quasi-recitativo repetition of the words on page 67, with the octave merging into the hollow fifth with the chasm between the tenor and the alto. It could not be rewritten without irreparable injury. On pages 70 and 71 the faltering repeated " pro nobis," with the sudden *f* on " sub " and the long unison " Pilato," broken at the end, as if the Roman Governor were staggering under the enormity of his offence, and the *p*, " passus " with the first note accented, is a supremely original conception, thought of in terms of choral medium. The high E, line 3, bar 4, page 76, suddenly hurled out by the altos, colours the repeated " vivos " in a remarkable way. The long exacting fugue, "Et vitam venturi saeculi," page 82 *et seq.*, is one of the most troublesome things in the whole work to rehearse, but the results, except

for the reservation made earlier when discussing the quaver runs, are compensation enough for any labour that may be spent over it. The lengthy passages of maintained *p* are, so far as I know, without ancestry in choral fugue writing, and are marvellously effective after the many previous pages of excitement and energy. Up to Beethoven's time the form of the fugue was generally reserved in choral works for powerful effects, or to eke out portions of the text which lent themselves only to scholastic writing. But this fugue, which, as Mr. Harvey Grace points out, bristles with every technical device, is totally unlike any choral fugue written before Beethoven, and I cannot remember that any succeeding composer has attempted anything on similar lines. On pages 92-97 we have further use of devices met with earlier in the Mass, soft deep supports to florid quartet passages, crisp, whispered short chords (the first line of page 95 is particularly successful in this respect) and choral chords with the solo voices poised above.

The " Benedictus " contains some beautiful choral writing. The opening unison bass passage, page 105, with a natural stress caused by the solitary E, is as apt a choice of medium as that of the " Et incarnatus." No less essentially choral and telling are the reiterated thirds to " in nomine Domini," beginning *f* and fading to *p*, with the third entry, given to full chorus and the diminuendo delayed, pages 108, 109, 113. At the top of page 117 the tenors are pitched above the female voices, so that the commencement of the final Osannas may break in clearly upon the " Benedictus."

The solemnity of the opening of the " Agnus Dei," page 118, is maintained by the absence of the soprano solo voice for more than three pages, and that of the chorus sopranos for four. Even then, the latter enter on low notes. Beethoven is very sparing in use of chorus divisi. After a few cases in the " Christe " he returns to it no more until the " Agnus Dei " is reached, and the solemn four-part male harmony, dovetailing with the bass solo phrases, bring a new emotional colour. On page 120 he gently adds the altos, who blend in the scheme with subtle beauty. The bass drop to F natural, page 122, with the low-lying alto and tenor almost deserted, for once, by the orchestra, speak of foreboding, while the tender violin melody above speaks of wavering hope. The passage would have been even finer had Beethoven known that a bass low E would have been audible through the reticent instrumentation, and had he written the fourth and fifth notes an octave lower. With true insight he makes the sopranos steal in almost unobserved at the top of that page, and only climb to his beloved high note when the solo soprano is nearing the end of her trying " miserere." On page 127 the contrast afforded by the bass and tenor on " pacem " moving slowly downward below the staccato

upward progression of the highest strings, with the reverse procedure following immediately, is a subtle point of colour. The despairing cries of " pacem " on page 129, with the curiously, yet cunningly, spaced third chord in each line, followed by the seven cruel gaunt fifths, are magnificent examples of simplicity in choral writing, attaining its ends with inevitable sureness. Another unique effect is the restless swinging sixths in the altos on page 135. The spacing of the chords on the mighty cry of "Agnus Dei " on page 140 is peculiar, and is yet in keeping with the strange fierce orchestral " Presto " which precedes it.

If this enumeration of examples seems long, I must plead it is necessary to refute with chapter and verse, instead of with mere generalities, the prevailing opinion of the choral writing of the Missa Solennis. Many examples could have been added had a more extended article been possible, but there ought to be sufficient to induce students to reconsider the common judgment. It is unfortunately true that many splendid choral designs are obscured by Beethoven's practice of doubling almost everything with the orchestra. It was a habit of mind as the *continuo* was with Bach. Mendelssohn followed the tradition, the chorus was an addition to the orchestra, not a collateral element capable of functioning independently. When one considers how seldom, if ever, Beethoven heard a capable chorus united with orchestra, when one realises the conditions of the time from the story of the first performance of his " Christus am Oelberg," one marvels at the insight of this genius who could invent a new technique for a medium with which he was almost unfamiliar, and create a new entity so extraordinarily varied and marvellously expressive. Professor Tovey's theory that had Beethoven lived he would have entered into a period of great choral writing is amply justified by a critical study of this work.

Few of us have heard an ideal performance of the Missa Solennis. The principle stumbling block is the soprano line. Some day an enterprising conductor will dismiss his sopranos for a half-season, call for volunteers, and carefully test them so that a body of really high sopranos is chosen to add to the other three lines. With all mezzos eliminated and a powerful battalion of fresh, pure upper voices, he ought to be able to let us hear the Mass in D in a way which will not leave us conscious of human limitations, and which will lead us into those exalted realms where Byrd, Bach and Beethoven dwelt when they were in the Spirit and the Spirit within them.

W. G. Whittaker.

THE MINOR COMPOSERS

Beethoven, if one may attempt an estimate of things beyond the reach of statistics, inherited about as little as he bequeathed. This statement requires qualifying only where his influence on others is concerned, for as regards his own indebtedness to his precursors, it is clearly limited to certain procedures and does not extend to the actual matter of his thought. Put briefly, the truth would perhaps be that his art is imitative, but not derivative. On the other hand it does seem as if Beethoven had changed the direction of music for pretty nearly the whole of the nineteenth century; but on reflection one discovers that although the change came about with Beethoven, it did not come about directly through him. He marks roughly the beginning of romanticism, without being in the least entitled to be called the first romantic. Apart from the fact that romanticism was a movement too vast and too multiform, even in its bearings on one art alone, to be set in motion by any single personality, it is certain that in music it would have pursued to all intents and purposes the same direction had Beethoven never existed. It was already in the air when he began to cut a figure in the world. If any art can be said to have set it in motion, that art is literature; if any man, that man is Rousseau.

Beethoven, then, fell in with an advance already in full swing. He came indeed to command an important wing of it, but its plan of campaign was by that time so firmly laid that his absence would not have materially modified the strategic position. Like the true commander, he stood outside the causes that led to the upheaval and above its effects. But he was something beside a participant in certain phases of romanticism: if anything, it was his democratic attitude towards his art that made him a pioneer in the musical movement towards self-expression of the nineteenth century, a century that was to be in its outlook mainly subjective, elegiac, Aristotelian (or whatever term one may care to substitute for the distractingly comprehensive one of " romantic "), as against the objective, epic, Platonic (or " classical ") trend of the eighteenth century.

Nothing shows Beethoven's artistic republicanism more clearly than a study of his associations with other composers, which, though they reveal in their practical results no decided allegiance to any creative musician, at any rate show at least as close a collaboration with minor

figures as with dominant personalities. It is impossible to see that any of the older great masters influenced Beethoven to any wider extent than that of certain mannerisms, for which he is indebted to them proportionately to their proximity to him in point of time. Most nearly contemporary, although born before Mozart, was Haydn, whose inheritance may be perceived much more clearly in Beethoven's early works than the Mozartian idiom which it is a commonplace of criticism to discern there. To Handel, although he considered him the greatest of all, he owed far less; and with Bach, admiration for whom he expressed by subscribing to the complete edition and by the wish to compose something for the benefit of Bach's only surviving daughter, he had little temperamental or technical affinity. Palestrina, the oldest musical genius whom we know him to have studied, he revered, but would have thought it folly to imitate.

What he had from Haydn and Mozart amounted to no more than the vocabulary and syntax of a language they used before him; but it is important to remember that this language was equally the property of their minor contemporaries, and the more obtrusive in their music the less weighty the ideas they had to express through it. The minor composers, therefore, and Beethoven's attitude towards them or theirs towards him, according to their chronological position, yield material for study the importance of which has never been acknowledged by any extensive literary treatment. Only the fringes of so vast a subject can be touched here.

The earliest experiences of Beethoven's career, which took a predominantly practical form at first, were in the main operatic. When he played the viola at the Bonn theatre, he must have actually taken part in works by many of the favourite composers of the day. The following were represented in the repertory of 1789-91: Benda (Georg), Cimarosa, Dalayrac, Desaides, Dittersdorf, Gluck, Grétry, Guglielmi, Martin, Martini, Monsigny, Mozart, Paisiello, Sacchini, Salieri, Sarti, Schubauer, Schuster, Umlauf, and Zingarelli. In the preceding years he must have already played the cembalo in, or at least listened to, operas by several of these, in addition to works by Anfossi, Duni, Gassmann, Gossec, Holzbauer, Philidor, and Piccinni. What he knew, as a boy-organist, of church music, is more difficult to determine, while purely instrumental music does not seem to have flourished at Bonn at that time. Neither was it widely cultivated outside private houses in Vienna after Beethoven's arrival there. Public concerts were as yet unknown and the fashionable subscription concerts, the Akademien of which we hear so much in connection with Mozart, had subsided since that master's death. His inferior successor to the post of Imperial Chamber Composer, Kozeluch—

Beethoven once called him *miserabilis*—was no more qualified to provide music that could make endurable the endless programmes to which the over-leisured classes thought it their duty to listen, than his colleagues, Anton Eberl, Aloys Förster, Johann Vanhall, and the rest of them. The church was served rather better by rigid traditionalists like Albrechtsberger and Eybler; but, as at Bonn, it was in the theatre that music had its happiest home. Not that even there the men of the moment were of great consequence. Who remembers as much as the name of the Italianised Frenchman Pierre Dutillier, or of the Moravian Paul Wranitzky? Who knows anything of the Singspiele, immensely popular though they were in their time, of Wenzel Müller and Johann Schenk? And who owes any gratitude, except for his vicarious achievement of finishing Mozart's Requiem, to Süssmayr? Gyrowetz, for whose facile dramatic talent Beethoven had a certain esteem, did not produce his first opera until 1804. Vienna, on the eve of a new century, lay somnolent, awaiting in brooding stillness the creative cataclysm whose name was Beethoven.

The awakening genius had little use for the colleagues around him, though he respected the work of Salieri and Eybler and admired the operas of Weigl, one of whose airs he preserved in the clarinet trio (Op. 11); but that he listened to the best of the extra-Viennese operatic music of the period, as well as the finest examples of earlier Italian and French works for the stage, cannot be doubted, for the repertory of the Court opera was one of the best-stored in Europe.

In spite of the dearth of concerts, Beethoven must have heard a good deal of chamber music in his early Vienna days, for it was not long before he was invited to the great houses where gifted amateurs and famous performers would join forces in the performance of concerted works, and where that curious product of the time, the extempore pianist, was received with the most flattering hospitality. Beethoven's genius for fiery and exalted improvisation was soon discovered and he was pitted against the most famous performers of the day, surpassing them all in depth of instantaneous invention, although invariably excelled by his opponents in matters of technique and sometimes, as in the case of the Abbé Vogler, in learned contrapuntal playing. The priest-musicians, half clerical dignatories and half artistic worldlings, were typical figures in the drawing-rooms of the late eighteenth century, and Beethoven in his younger days not only listened with surprising toleration to their elegant and interminable embroideries on themes of other people's invention, but actually imitated their manner. In 1791, at Aschaffenburg, he had already come across the Abbé Sterkel, whose playing he appreciated and emulated; from the Rev. Joseph Gelinek, of whom Weber said that the

only theme he never varied was himself, he drew the acknowledgment that there was the very devil in him; and to the Abbé Stadler he very nearly inscribed a set of variations, but withdrew the dedication because a work had to be found in a hurry to bestow on Count Lichnowski. It was Stadler, by the way, whom Beethoven, when he was ill in 1826, summoned by means of a three-part canon to come and give him the benediction of the Church and whom he hoped the devil would take if he did not turn up. The jest would be too trifling to record were it not that it serves as an illustration of his attitude towards his contemporaries. They might be friends if they would consent to be useful, and they would be consigned to all the pagan and Christian spirits of negation if they thwarted him in any way. As in life, so in art. Beethoven would freely help himself to whatever processes of craftsmanship he found of use in the work of his predecessors and contemporaries, and measure their value solely by the amount of their utility to him. Hence the curious want of balance between his praise and his disparagement of other people's work.

With the purely secular pianists of the day, too, Beethoven came into more or less friendly conflict. Wölfl became known in Vienna when Beethoven was already well established there; they respected each other the more, perhaps, because neither had to give the other anything. Wölfl's art of improvisation, according to Ignaz von Seyfried, was clear and well-ordered, while Beethoven's had the fitfulness of sudden and irrepressible flashes of thought. In composition also they contrived to run side by side without colliding, and for the same reasons. Beethoven was doubtless aware how transient the immense popularity secured by the shallow fluency of his rival's work would be. It was much the same in the case of Hummel, for whose elegant futilities Beethoven can have had no use; but here was some personal antagonism as well, not unmixed with a certain off-hand affection; Hummel was, it will be remembered, the " falscher Hund " of one day and the " Herzens-Nazerl " of the next. For another idol of fashion, Steibelt, he seems to have nurtured a personal dislike rather than an artistic aversion. Of Himmel he had already made an enemy during his visit to Berlin in 1796, when he asked that inexhaustible improviser, who was pouring forth extemporaneous inanities at the piano, how soon he would have done preluding and when he was going to begin in earnest.

It was on the occasion of the same visit that he met Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, to whom he said with his characteristic clumsy good-nature that his playing was by no means royal or princely, but that of an excellent pianist. But it was a musician of the older contrapuntal school who impressed him most in Berlin. This was

C. F. C. Fasch, the conductor of the Singakademie, on themes of whose vocal works he improvised, much to the delight of this famous choral society. It would be interesting to know whether Beethoven heard Field in 1802, but this is unlikely, for he had not yet made the acquaintance of Clementi, in whose company the Irish musician visited Vienna.

There are no indications that Beethoven ever met the most original of the pianist-composers of the day, Dussek. That he must have known the latter's sonatas, however, seems beyond doubt, for here at last we come upon an influence that extended beyond interpretation to creation. Much in Dussek's work is extraordinarily Beethovenian, and those who are not conversant with the dates of the two composers would inevitably conclude that the greater of them held the smaller in thrall to an astonishing degree. If there is any influence at work, however, the position is the reverse. Dussek's dates are difficult to fix, but it is certain that by the time Beethoven began his first three piano sonatas, he had written at least fourteen of his, including one that has a singular and striking resemblance to the "Pathétique." That Beethoven must have known and loved Clementi's Sonatas no one can doubt who plays through these astonishingly vital works, which, among the tangled cross-currents of influence that pervade the art of music, seem to establish an otherwise unsuspected link between him and Domenico Scarlatti. Clementi often suddenly drops into a bareness of texture that is in its way as telling as that of Scarlatti and may occasionally be found again in Beethoven's sonatas with no less effect. For the rest, Beethoven never penetrated to the secret of Clementi's luminous handling of the keyboard any more than the latter had the faculty for building up a movement that can be apprehended as a solid unity.

It is noteworthy that such faint traces of external influence as we can discern in Beethoven's work disappear by degrees as he approaches full maturity. One might perhaps fix the beginning of its rapid extinction soon after "Fidelio," where the example of Cherubini, whom Beethoven valued as the first dramatic composer then living, is still too evident to escape observation. On reading through the most representative of Cherubini's operas one is forcibly reminded of passage after passage in "Fidelio," not so much by an actual likeness as by surprising turns of invention and an elevation of feeling common to both composers. Beethoven also liked Cherubini's conception of the Requiem Mass, and proposed to adopt some features of his treatment of the text, should he ever come to write such a work.

It would be interesting to know how much of the gradual emancipation of Beethoven's style was due to a growing conviction of his

creative independence, and how much to his increasing deafness that cut him off by degrees from listening to other people's work. The impossibility of discovering what he actually could hear at various periods of his life makes it highly desirable that an aurist with enough interest in music to compensate him for this kind of speculative labour should make a careful study of the pathological facts of the case, so far as they can be gathered from the available documents. It seems probable that Beethoven's was the kind of deafness that shuts the sufferer out almost completely from conversation, but makes his ears less unreceptive to music. There is some evidence, too, that his hearing did not decline steadily, but was subject to the fluctuations of his general health, and perhaps also to those of the weather, his temper, and so on. In 1814, Tomaschek wrote of him: "The poor man was exceptionally hard of hearing that day," and a similar remark implying intermittent aggravation of the complaint is to be found in Fanny del Rio's sentimental diary as late as November, 1818. Beethoven also told August von Kloeber, who drew his portrait the same year, that he often went to the gallery of the Opera, because the concerted pieces could be heard better there. Rochlitz, in 1822 says he is stone deaf; Schulz, the following year, that he is not so deaf as people say.

One thing is certain: metaphorically, Beethoven was already on many occasions deaf to the work of others before his physical hearing became impaired. During his visit to Prague in 1798, when Mozart's triumphs there were still in everyone's mind, Tomaschek asked him what he thought of that master's operas, only to receive the astonishing reply that he did not know them and had no desire to become acquainted with them. He did not wish, he said, to listen much to other people's music, lest he should sacrifice some of his originality. This statement, however, may have been something of an affectation; it certainly requires qualifying by the fact that while he could yet hear he was frequently one of the notable figures at the Opera in Vienna, and that even after deafness had set in, he was sometimes provided by the management with a seat immediately behind the orchestra and was there seen to lean over the barrier in order to catch as much of the music as possible.

Beethoven agreed with the Viennese in their enthusiasm for Méhul, whose fastidiousness and classical purity, though it verged on weakness at times, could not fail to appeal to so fervent a devotee of Gluck. But of Méhul's influence there is as little to be discerned in his work as there is of Gluck's. For all his admiration of simplicity and detachment, his artistic need of self-expression got the better, whenever true inspiration was on him, of any deliberate intellectual resolu-

tion to subscribe to the classicism preached by Winckelmann and practised by Goethe in his later years. It is only in some inferior works, written in cold blood, that Beethoven contrives to maintain something like an Attic deportment. One might almost say that he was a romantic against his will: certainly he was a romantic without knowing it.

It is unfortunately not clear whether Beethoven knew the original of "Fidelio," a setting of Bouilly's libretto of "Léonore ou L'Amour conjugal," by Pierre Gaveaux; on the other hand it is certain that he was familiar with Paër's treatment of an Italian version of the same book. It was through this work that he became impressed by the libretto and induced Sonnleithner to make a German opera text of it. That he was not indifferent to Paër's music is proved by the story of his famous sally on hearing that composer's "Achille" ("How beautiful! I shall have to set this to music."), and by his composition of the Funeral March in the sonata in A flat (Op. 26), to which the success of a similar movement in the same opera challenged him.

The amusing tale of the Diabelli variations, characteristic though probably legendary, also shows that Beethoven seemingly would not collaborate with his fellow-musicians except under provocation. To be asked to contribute one variation to a collection by various composers, and that on a theme by a man whom he had hitherto only dealt with as a publisher, was just the sort of irritant to make him dash down thirty-three of them in a fury of inspiration. As for the themes on which he chose to write variations without pressure from outside, including the numerous British national songs sent to him by Thomson of Edinburgh for other purposes, it is difficult to think that his choice can have been invariably dictated by predilection. The Mozart and Handel themes doubtless appealed to him, and his admiration for "God Save the King" is well known. His early operatic career probably accounts for the choice of tunes by Dittersdorf, Grétry, Paisiello and Salieri, but what it was that can have induced a composer so disdainful of any pandering to fashion to handle themes by Dressler, Righini, Haibel and Wranitzky, it is impossible to discover now. His treatment of an air by the feeble but prolific and popular Winter, for whom, as a mean intriguer against Mozart, he can have had no personal esteem, has indeed the appearance of a momentary concession to public taste, just as the variations for four hands on a theme by Count Waldstein must be accepted as one of his rare spells of formal politeness towards a friendly patron. To Süssmayr he may have paid a similar tribute in consideration of the many details he must have heard from this favourite pupil of Mozart's about a precursor for whom he had a vast though not unqualified reverence. It is doubtful whether he was aware that Arne was

the composer of "Rule, Britannia," when he used that tune in a set of variations and in "The Battle of Vittoria," though curiously enough some of the original features of the song, which have since disappeared, are retained by him. He probably accepted it, in spite of its eighteenth century artificiality, as one of the numerous old British folk-songs sent to him by Thomson.

Nothing indicates that he knew the work of any of the great English composers of the past, of whose existence he cannot have been unaware, since a copy of Burney's History was found in his library after his death. But it must be borne in mind how little English music was published at the time, and how little therefore was known even in England. Most of Beethoven's correspondents there, except Neate, Broadwood, Smart and Potter, with whom he had only casual dealings, were foreign exponents of Continental music settled in London, who had no interest in the British school, even if they did happen to know it.

Of the glories of old Italian music Beethoven was almost equally unaware, even after he had made an exhaustive study of church music to discover how the Latin prosody of the Mass was treated by the old masters. The net result of his investigations was a rather grudging tribute to Palestrina and the conclusion that the Germans, Bach and Handel, were after all the only great masters. Allegri's "Miserere," still regarded at the time as one of the great models for the church composer, he expressly confessed he did not know, and left it at that.

The magnificent egotism whereby Beethoven cut himself adrift from the past, partly by ignoring much of its music altogether and partly by resisting imitation even of what he most admired, not unnaturally displayed itself even more crudely in the face of the music of the future. There are no signs that he cared about the direction it would take and whether it would be affected by his own genius or not. He did not set out to found a school and, as it turned out later, he did not even unconsciously establish a direct following. To all his younger contemporaries he was indifferent, though jealous of none. Rossini, who during his last years began to exercise an extraordinary sway over the Viennese and whom he cordially disliked, he acknowledged to be "a great theatre painter" and a melodious composer, but he considered his success due to the frivolous, sensuous spirit of the time. With the "Barbiere di Siviglia" he was, nevertheless, so frankly delighted that he felt inclined to write a similar comic opera himself for the excellent Italian company who appeared in Rossini's work. About Meyerbeer he expressed himself in scornfully disparaging terms in 1814, when that composer, it must be remembered, was still known chiefly as a pianist and had only produced three unsuccess-

ful operas. Perhaps his abuse meant some kind of recognition, for he could be commiseratingly indulgent to musicians who did not matter. Of Seyfried, for instance, he once said that " after all there must be composers like this too, for what would the common crowd do without them ? " Spohr, when he saw Beethoven in 1813, soon discovered that he showed no sign of interest in the work of others; but though Spohr lacked the courage to submit him any of his music, Beethoven must have seen some of it later, and the verdict was that it contained too great a wealth of dissonance and that enjoyment of it was impaired by the chromatic nature of the melody. It is the sort of judgment which any musician of the time would have delivered as a matter of course. In Spontini Beethoven appreciated the contrivance of good theatrical effect and—it is the composer of " The Battle of Vittoria " who speaks—a capital understanding of musical war noises.

That Beethoven, even with a more comprehensive critical perception than a creative genius can in the nature of things possess, could not have seen much hope for the future must in a measure be ascribed to the fact that no absolutely great composer, Schubert excepted, was born for some time after him. It was only in the first two decades of the nineteenth century that the lull between what may be conveniently labelled classicism and romanticism was suddenly interrupted by the surprising appearance of the great constellation of Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Wagner and Verdi. Of these only the two most precocious became known to Beethoven, who said that Mendelssohn promised much at the age of twelve and who may or may not have kissed Liszt publicly on the concert platform, but certainly called him a " Teufelskerl." Of Schubert he seems to have been curiously ignorant almost to the last. It is improbable that he came up from the country in the summer of 1820 to be present at the productions of " Die Zwillingsbrüder " and " Die Zauberharfe," the only two events in his short career of his younger fellow-citizen which brought him before a wide public in his lifetime.

The few pupils Beethoven accepted obtained guidance rather than tuition from him. Not that he was careless about a severe technical grounding, but while prescribing the time-honoured text books of Marpurg, Kirnberger, Fux and Albrechtsberger, from which he had himself learnt all that is theoretically teachable, he preferred that his disciples should seek instruction elsewhere and come to him only for advice. It is to be feared that his counsel must have uprooted many of the precepts just implanted in the pupil. " Who forbade consecutive fifths? " he asked Ferdinand Ries, and on being respectfully referred to the above authorities recommended by himself, he said: " In that case I allow them ! "

Ries and the Archduke Rudolph were his only regular pupils. The former, under whose father he had once studied the violin at Bonn, was one of the few musicians directly influenced by him. Indeed he once complained that Ries imitated him unduly and he rarely observed even the formality of showing interest in the work of so faithful an adherent. There is not a vestige of distress in a letter addressed to Ries in London that deals with the non-arrival of a sonata by the latter dedicated to him. But he played works by this pupil with his Imperial scholar, who had apparently never done learning under him, and he went so far as to say that the music of Ries was much liked, not indeed by himself, but by the Archduke. Once, however, a cadenza written by Ries for his C minor concerto won his warm approval: so self-centred is genius, and needs must be, that no work by another matters unless it affects his own. What Beethoven thought of the Archduke as a musician is hard to determine. The value of some eulogistic references to a set of "masterly variations" is discounted by a courtly tone that does not ring true in Beethoven's letters, by the fact that they were based on a theme of his own and dedicated to him, and perhaps also by the obligation under which he placed himself by his continuous breaking of appointments with his Imperial Highness on account of ill-health.

The only foreign composer influenced by Beethoven to some extent by personal contact was Cipriani Potter, whom he received several times during the English musician's visit to Vienna in 1817. Incredible though it be, Beethoven looked carefully at the score of an overture by Potter, after actually asking to see some of his compositions, and he offered to peruse any works written under another teacher. But what is really interesting is not Beethoven's attitude to Potter, but the latter's view of Beethoven. On hearing him improvise, Potter thought that some of his "unheard-of harmonies, or better, disharmonies" were due to his deafness; but were they not merely beyond the Potterism of the time?

With Czerny Beethoven always remained in close and cordial relation after the year 1805, when he furnished the boy-pianist with a glowing testimonial. It was Czerny on whom fell the task of teaching the obdurate nephew Carl the piano later on, of correcting proofs and arranging the piano score of "Fidelio," though Moscheles also claims that distinction. If anything of Czerny's immense output beyond a few pedagogic works were remembered to-day, it is possible that the influence of the man whose complete piano music he could play from memory, although he had to read his own, could still be traced in it. But what end is to be served by looking for it through a catalogue of nearly a thousand works, many of which contain scores of

separate numbers? Does it matter whether or no we discover the impress of a towering genius in the work of men who are no longer of any significance to the art of music? The point that interests us to-day, a hundred years after Beethoven's death, is that for all that can be traced of immediate indebtedness to him in the composers of the nineteenth century who still count, he might never have existed, any more than his great precursors need have lived and worked so far as his music is concerned. What he seems to have inherited from them, any of his minor forerunners may have bequeathed to him: what he handed down was for the small successors to fritter away at least as much as for the great ones to invest profitably. Beethoven teaches us at once reverence for the great genius as a solitary phenomenon and respect for minor artists as links in an evolution from the continuity of which he breaks away along a path of his own.

ERIC BLOM.

CHAMBER MUSIC

It would perhaps not be quite true to say that many of Beethoven's chamber works are neglected or unknown; we do not know into how many households they may have entered nor how often they may there be played. But certainly as regards public performances the works with piano are far less often played than the string quartets. The reason for this is obvious; there are a number of professional string quartet parties, but very few fine pianists who are in the habit of practising regularly with stringed instrument players. So far as Beethoven is concerned the pianist contents himself with the solo sonatas, and though we sometimes get a public performance of the *Kreutzer* Sonata (" scritta in uno stilo molto concertante ") it generally appears as an item in a violinist's recital where the chamber-music atmosphere is absent and it is looked on rather as a solo than a duet. (By the way, in performing duet sonatas why does not the violinist sit down as he used to do in the old Monday Popular Concert days ?)

The reason why chamber works with piano are so seldom played is that modern pianists are little accustomed to playing with others. There is every excuse for them of course; as soloists they have an enormous amount of fine music to choose from, whereas the string player must seek out other musicians before he can play chamber-music at all. But the fact remains that the pianist (amateur or professional) is, as a rule, a bad *ensemble* player; he finds difficulty in adapting himself to the give and take of chamber-music and his rhythm is often weak. He is therefore not wanted by the string players who are naturally more at home in *ensemble* music and are inclined to resent a performer on a keyboard instrument " invading the chastity " of their string quartet.

The difficulty of hearing fine performances of these works by Beethoven is much to be regretted, since they are as representative of his various periods as the string quartets. The three piano trios, Op. 1, may not be so advanced technically as the six quartets, Op. 18 (although even here the 'cello is beginning to detach itself from the bass of the harmony) partly because Beethoven had not at that time developed his piano style to fit in with the new instrument and the new sonata form. And this is so also with the three early sonatas for piano and violin, although here a distinct advance is to be noted, especially in the whimsical and original Sonata in A, Op. 12, No. 2.

But as second period works, the two trios, Op. 70, and the *Kreutzer* Sonata may fairly be ranked with the great Rasumowski quartets, and the two sonatas for 'cello and piano, Op. 102, are entirely representative of the third period. Although numbered as Op. 97 the long trio in B♭ has all the marks of a second period work; that is to say it has more in common with the *Waldstein* Sonata, for instance, than with its neighbour, the piano and violin sonata in G, Op. 96, which has many characteristics of the third period.

One can hardly write for long about Beethoven without some mention of Haydn and Mozart, and it may fairly be said, I think, that there is at least as much disparity between their sonatas and trios and those of Beethoven as there is between their string quartets and Beethoven's. After all, their string quartets are perfect in their kind, and nothing can be more lovely than many of Mozart's works in this form; but their violin sonatas and trios are (with few exceptions) quite slight in scope and texture, and lack the breadth, intensity and concentration of Beethoven's. As an example: in some of Mozart's piano and violin sonatas there is no development of material at all after the first double-bar; new melodies are introduced and the original subjects are resumed without having been subjected to any fresh treatment. Now even in Beethoven's first trio, Op. 1, No. 1, the development section is founded on figures already heard. This difference in treatment need not be taken as indicating "progress"; if the movement can be carried on consistently without any special treatment of its subject matter there seems really no reason why there should be any such development—as in opera a character may be musically delineated without the aid of a *leit-motif*. But Beethoven's method is indicative of a more intellectual view of instrumental music, and he worked it out with an imaginative thoroughness that later composers have not surpassed.

The association of one or two stringed instruments with the piano in a big scale work has obvious disadvantages, and it is rather surprising that so many sonatas for violin and piano continue to get written; the two instruments do not blend well, and the modern piano is apt to overpower the violin in a climax. So many modern works in this form sound like a violin solo with an over-elaborate and discursive piano accompaniment, and the intimate charm of real chamber-music is lacking. It is in the *Kreutzer* Sonata and the last trio in B♭ that Beethoven has most nearly approached this modern rhetorical style; in the composition of these splendid works an audience—and a large one—must have been in Beethoven's mind. But it is likely that the more intimate and introspective last Sonata in G and the two trios, Op. 70, appeal even more strongly to the performers than to their hearers. It is possible to imagine an effective orchestral version of

the B♭ trio (how beautiful the opening of the *Andante* should sound on the strings?) but there is very little in the trios, Op. 70, which call for any such intensification, and the Sonata in G would defy it altogether.

Beethoven wrote no piano quartets* or piano quintets. For this omission we may be truly sorry; the quintet is the most satisfactory of the combinations of the piano with strings, and a quintet by Beethoven on the scale of the B♭ trio would be a treasure. The reason for this avoidance of the piano quintet form by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven is probably that the piano of the time was felt to be not sonorous enough to call for the addition of the extra stringed instrument—also perhaps that chamber-music was not primarily written for public performance as it seems to be to-day.

A brief comparison between Brahms' Op. 100 and Beethoven's Op. 96, both sonatas for piano and violin, may not be uninteresting. They are very unlike in most respects, but the chief difference between them (and one, I think, that would be noted at once) is that the work of the more modern musician has an air of weariness and its beauty is of the mellow, autumnal type, whereas in Beethoven's work there is an abounding vitality and a reaching out after new forms of expression. Both works are essentially thoughtful, but Brahms is looking back and Beethoven forward. Also in Brahms's sonata the first and third movements are almost continuously lyrical and the violin is thereby better served than the piano. The middle movement is a combination of slow movement in duple and *scherzo* in triple time, and is, so far, something of a novelty, but the mood of wistful serenity which pervades the whole work is still there. In Beethoven's sonata the tone of the work is set not by the lyrical violin, but by the keyed instrument, and it may here be noted that all his sonatas are described as having been written for piano and violin (not violin and piano), and that in the very early works (by Haydn) written for this combination, the violin took a very subordinate part. The first movement of this Sonata in G is very cheerful and graceful and in regular form; the second is an expressive *Adagio* in which the chief singing theme is given out by the piano, and the short and lively *scherzo* follows without a break. The *finale* has some remarkable features. Its opening subject might have been written by Haydn, but the subsequent variations are written with the greatest freedom and variety of style. Especially remarkable is the *Adagio* section modulating at the end into E♭, in which key the violin enters in a tentative way with the first subject in its original form,

* Some juvenile performances need not be considered, and the work in E flat sometimes played as such is an arrangement of a quintet for piano and wind instruments.

after which the piano dashes into a brilliant variation in semi-quavers. An episodical variation in the fugal manner and in a minor key, in which the harmony of the theme is dimly outlined, precedes a return to the first subject in its original form. The vigour of the whole movement is remarkable, and the almost constant animation and cheerfulness of the whole sonata contrasts strongly with Brahms's more sober work. Both sonatas are thoroughly homogeneous, but Beethoven's has more variety. Of course in the Brahms work there is a greater harmonic richness, due partly to the modern use of the sustaining pedal of the piano. Brahms also makes more use of chords and double-stopping on the violin.

Another comparison that may fairly be made is that between the two piano trios in B♭ by Beethoven and Schubert, Op. 97 and Op. 99 respectively. Here, the composers being contemporaries, there is not so much difference in the treatment of the instruments, although Schubert makes a freer use of accompaniment figures than Beethoven. Somebody once said, or is reported to have said, that Schubert was a feminine Beethoven, meaning presumably that what used to be regarded (probably quite incorrectly) as masculine virtues—vigour, strength of will and intense concentration—were to some extent lacking in Schubert, but were compensated for by a stronger infusion of tenderness and sentiment. Certainly a comparison of these two trios lends some colour to such a theory. Both are large scale works carried out in the grand manner, but there is a far greater definiteness and fixity of purpose in the Beethoven trio. Beethoven was not only content to write beautiful music; if his scheme demanded it he could be abrupt, uncompromising, harsh. Also he was for ever reaching out after new methods. Schubert, on the other hand was quite content with existing forms; he was too complacent at times, as in certain movements of the *Trout* Quintet and the last movement of this trio, where nothing in the way of development is attempted. Both these trios are in the usual four movements, but in Schubert they are self-contained, whereas in Beethoven's work the slow movement leads directly into the *finale*, the coda of which starts as a variation in six-eight of the original theme but afterwards introduces entirely new matter which seems, however, to issue quite naturally from what has gone before. Such adventures were not for Schubert. His *finale* as has been said, contains no development, and his exquisite slow movement is purely lyrical in conception and execution. The opening subject of the first movement, although striking enough, has not the noble repose and underlying strength of the corresponding theme in Beethoven's work. Schubert was always happiest when he was singing, and Beethoven when he was developing, as one may plainly see in these trios, although the lovely *cantabile* of the Beethoven

Andante and the effective treatment of the themes in the first movement of the Schubert must not be forgotten.

Since Beethoven, the composition of works for the piano and one or two stringed instruments has been plentiful and continuous. It is not an ideal combination like the string quartet, but it admits of greater richness of harmony and a more extended compass. Modern works in this form differ from those of the older masters mainly in the treatment of the piano — pedal effects and special kinds of figure-work suited to the instruments are introduced—such effects as we find in the trios and sonatas of Schumann for instance. In Mendelssohn's two trios the piano is perhaps kept going too continuously, as the strings are with Schumann. In Brahms's sonatas and trios a proper balance between the instruments is preserved and they are truly chamber-music, although in the trios he makes perhaps a wider appeal, as does Dvorák in his very fine and elaborate trio in F minor. So far as regards the artistic and appropriate manipulation of the instruments the sonatas and trios of the French school, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Pierné, etc., are unsurpassed.

But the scope and range of Beethoven's works are wider than any of those which have succeeded them. Beethoven does not, like Mozart, always exactly adapt his music to the medium in which he happens to be working. His thought sometimes transcends his means, and this is as true of certain of his chamber-works with piano as of the last string quartets. They are sometimes insufficient—awkward even—but in chamber-music, more than in any other form of composition it is not the actual sound of the music that matters so greatly as the primal impulse by which it was engendered. Pure artistry may decline to a mere slickness and facility; perfect performances may be given of such works. But with Beethoven there is always so much that is not fully expressed in the music, and such works are the supreme test of the executive artist. Some apprehension of this hidden spirit may be vouchsafed to the musical amateur which the experienced and accomplished performer may lack, and there is therefore hope for anybody who will tackle these works with due humility and sincerity. None of the Beethoven trios, for instance, makes any excessive call upon the technical ability of the player (in this respect they differ from Schubert's trios in which the 'cello parts in particular are very awkward and difficult), but they demand above all musical insight of a high order, in addition of course to the habit of listening to the other parts, and a keen sense of rhythm, without which qualities no chamber-music should be attempted at all.

RICHARD WALTHEW.

TWO CRITIQUES

I—RICHARD STRAUSS

The indubitably brilliant and vital musical figure of Richard Strauss leaves a dual and therefore curious impression. On the one hand the musician cannot but detect in him the traits of a genetic affinity with the great prophets of the German musical pantheon, cannot but recognise that Richard Strauss is flesh and blood of that superb tone culture which created Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Wagner. The musician must bow down before his undoubted "musicianly," purely technical material, of the same nature as the mastery of "the great ones"—the durable, solid quality, nourished on the tradition of the ages and implanted in the very organism of mastery. Nor can the musician be other than delighted with the brilliancy of his orchestral ideas and colours—elemental, compelling, mighty—nor be insensible to the enormous intenseness of that creative genius, its will to power, its colossal, titanic sweep, its vast scale. Strauss is not the miniaturist, to whom we have grown accustomed in this age of seeking for the dainty and bejewelled; he paints gigantic pictures, either frescoes or decorations, with an exaggerated tonal perspective "larger than natural size." It is necessary to listen to him "from a distance," just as we view Buonarotti in his cyclopean structures. His dynamism subjugates, exhausts; his palette overwhelms opposition; his rank as a qualified master is beyond doubt. And yet . . .

Here begins a big "yet." Yes, Strauss is like his great "ancestors," but is not the resemblance that of the peaceful striped zebra to the savage tiger, of the degenerate aristocrat to his knightly forefathers? Yes, "Richard II" is a master—but is it mastery or merely the knack of a craftsman who has been trained in a good school? There are, of course, master-craftsmen in Germany—nothing is more common. . . . It is true that the scale of Strauss's creations is vast, the sweep titanic; but is this the inward grandeur of a gigantic effort of the spirit, or a purely external physical enlargement of the "scale," a purely arithmetical multiplication of the dimensions and tones? Are his figures larger than life because they are "gods" and are symbolically fashioned on a gigantic scale, or simply because Strauss with his magic lantern has projected them, "greatly magnified," on the glittering surface of an advertising

placard? Is his greatness quantitative or qualitative? The impressions of Strauss's creative work are encompassed by a swarm of such doubts.

The very arising of these doubts points to the fact that there is something wrong with Strauss, that his titanism is not unconditional. He sprang up as a creative force at the period of Germany's political power. How brilliantly his work reflects the spirit of the new Germany—militant, harshly-grandiose, aspiring to prosperity, parade, and outward grandeur! Strauss's work is a fine and worthy "aggredient" to the martial and political sculpture and architecture of the new Germans. In their creative psychology they have always been functionally dependent on the political atmosphere. . . . In the days of her political humiliation Germany was more refined, more profound, and gave us the greatest geniuses of thought and feeling; with every improvement in her external prosperity she deteriorated and coarsened. The mastery seemed to remain, the genetic traits were preserved, but behind the visible features of art there appears to be a sort of internal vacuum, like a gigantic mountain of papier-maché, hollow within but outwardly in no way distinguishable from the Himalayas. Strauss's creative impulse is reduced to little more than dynamism, hypertrophied, all-pervading. Other aspects of music are unknown to him. To outward appearance a successor of Wagner, the great romantic, Strauss is organically and fundamentally lacking in romanticism. He is not a fantast but a "descriptive" artist, his music ends with tone and is exhausted by it. Of course there are ideas behind the music, but not that elusive aura which envelopes a creation with ineffable and inexpressible forms, imparting to it the inexhaustibility of the ever-changing ocean. Strauss is a realist and a "clever" man, but in general a prosaist. Even the philosophical intermedia to his music show this. He is either a simple programmatist on a dynamically-coloured tone basis, or he *imagines* that he is philosophising. But what a pitiful philosophy it is, and how it reminds one of some system of steam-heating after the living, fire-breathing lava of Wagner's thought! "Don Quixote" taken as an anecdote with "character" parts. "Zarathustra" with the profile of the old professor altered to that of the haunter of a Viennese tavern, and maintaining a significant silence with the smile of an experienced charlatan. Poor Nietzsche! Why, it was just such Germans as Strauss that he hated with all his soul, with the refinement of which perhaps Wagner alone was commensurate. Or the "hero" battling with his foes in "Heldenleben." But what sort of foes are they? Does it not remind us of some pompous colonial expedition against hundreds of negroes or other "savages" in Central Africa, something after the style of Field-Marshal Waldersee's

famous journey to the " Chinese war "? Was it worth while loading a 40-inch gun to overthrow (and then not decisively) a couple of dozen dummies personified as Strauss's foes in his music? How far are this cheapness, their warlike note, and these laurels from Beethoven's mightly conflict with fate, or from the titanic invisible figure of the struggle of the symbol-Siegfried with the terrible iron and gold world of the Nibelungen! This hero, always inflated like a titan and shaking the paper scenery, reads a protocol of his " labours " and makes himself easy in a peaceful existence. How fine is this " consolation " in a bourgeois self-satisfaction, and how psychologically typical! Here a characteristic feature of Strauss comes to the surface, a feature which visibly betrays his pseudo-titanism—namely, his unusual psychological lack of taste, which originates a corresponding tastelessness in his musical form. He does not understand that he has no taste; never once does he rise above this level. Such productions and moments as the dance of Zarathustra, the dance of Elektra, the finale of " Heldenleben," the whole of the " Sinfonia Domestica," may be qualified as world-examples of a truly titanic lack of taste.

Yes, and Berlioz, too, shared this defect, but in him it was, of course, counterbalanced by the passionate romanticism of his psychology. And we know that he was punished for a deficiency doubly unpardonable amongst the French.

If it is true that in every German, even a German of genius, there is a certain percentage of " untalentedness," this is particularly the case with regard to Strauss, as is especially apparent in what may be denoted as an absence of imagination, a scantiness of invention, a prosaicism of musical speech and thought.

Strauss's melodic contours reveal, first of all, his plane and level of inspiration—essentially dry and formal, but made passionate and attractive by his dynamism. The banal contours and profiles, the lack of invention in the rhythm, the strange, all-absorbing squareness and " soldierliness " of the rhythmical structures, reflecting a parade-ground quality of soul. Martial rhythms broke in imperiously on the romantico-heroic soul of Beethoven—but there it was the response of genius to the general atmosphere saturated with war, and here . . . the " victory " composition, the Wagner of the " Kaiser-marsch " developes into the full-summed composer. The melodic contours of Meyerbeer are the acme of refinement in comparison with these outlines, which are not pervaded, like Beethoven's, with the spirit of war and great events, but with the spirit of the restaurant and café, the motifs, to their great surprise, having sunk to the serious and monumental. The heroic operetta, magnified in scale a hundred times, and magnifying to a similar extent the tastelessness

and ponderousness of the wit. Psychologically, Strauss's melos is an enormous falling-off from that of Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner, saturated with an inward sonority and breathing aromas, as it were. He has bartered the exquisite world of chromatic revelations for an insipid diatonic scheme which lacks the primitive freshness of Beethoven's diatonism. His chromaticism is casual and fanciful, and he thinks rectilinearly diatonically and in rather vulgar restaurant types. But dynamic contours, almost rationally discoverable beforehand, are outlined on this canvas, and to a certain extent obscure the democratism of the actual melodic organism. Sometimes this is done so cleverly that one may even credit it with the quality of genius.

His harmonic world shows us the same degeneration from that of Wagner. Strauss is diatonic here too, which is natural after his melodic diatonism. He thinks essentially in triads. Like Beethoven, he accepts a dissonance classically, as a contrast to the euphony of the triad, as a dynamic colour, but not like the romantics as a new euphonic world of resonances. Hence there is no question of subtleness in his harmony; he gives us either a triadic harmony or the smudge of a pungent dissonance, a harmonic smear, which he seems to contemplate at a distance in a decorative aspect. His dissonances are not a self-existent world, but only a contrast to the world of harmonies and happiness. It is true that he uses several chromatic ideas from the Wagnerian lexicon, but they are taken just as they are and do not undergo any transformation. His dissonances, sometimes most pitiable, obtain justification through their very atrociousness. He piles up the melodic lines without troubling whether they penetrate each other harmoniously. For him, as a decorative artist, it is more important to " serve up " melodies than to bother about the resultant hotchpotch.

But here, too, whilst the dynamism of the idea is enormous there is an absence of taste. He lacks the magic of harmony, of which Wagner was a master. Strauss employs more primitive resources, and often works his design or intention with white thread. Profound reasoning is reflected in his harmonic world, just as in his melody—here there is essentially very little of the elemental, very little inspiration. Cases of inspiration in his harmony are rare, but they do exist; the general impression of his harmonic plane is, however, the same decline towards the classical tone-content as is perceptible in the diatonism of the melody.

As regards form Strauss is atectonic. His structures lack the musical plane, which is partly replaced by the programmatic plane, and partly by the general dynamic design. Here, to some extent, he is swayed by the programme tradition of the days of Liszt and Berlioz, but both the latter are far more tectonic than Strauss.

Strauss, however, is incontestably the possessor of the sense of rhythmoform; he never descends to protractedness or monotony. In this he is probably helped by his undoubted dynamic instinct—perhaps the only axis of his genius. Though atectonic, Strauss is rather old-fashioned in his conception of form; his creative psychics are saturated, as it were, with the traditional formulas. There was a reason for his beginning, like an honest German, in a decorous Gade-Mendelssohn manner. These formulas, like the café-chantant style of his melodic phrases, have so infected his flesh and blood that he cannot free himself from them, even in spite of the deliberate efforts which a survey of his creations will very often reveal.

Lastly, there is the palette. Strauss is a great colourist, but again his sonority shows a falling-off as compared with Wagner. He is far more essentially simple. Admitting that he has amazing resonances, unusual tone effects, they are always more quantitative than qualitative. He multiplies the numbers of his orchestra without any substantial alteration of its quality. From him we never have any of those fantastic, tender, magically enchanting tonal revelations which Wagner and Debussy gave us. His orchestral tone is compact and massive, and devoid of transparent and diaphanous effects, which are unsuited to his decorative style. Wagner alone knew how to combine to a certain extent the fantastic and visionary with the monumentally grandiose. Strauss is perpetually prosaic in his sonorities, though quantitatively overwhelming us by means of them. And his orchestral colours are not symbols nor astral apparitions as they are with Wagner and Debussy, but reasoned allegories, dynamically contrasted.

Nevertheless he creates a school, this ferro-concrete composer, which proves that in his artistic approach to creative work there is much that is not merely organic but actively suited to social and present-day questions. He is the first to create in music the decorative fashion of "smears," which upset the conservatives; the first to introduce the harsh dissonance as a colour enjoying equal rights with tender harmonies. Strauss cannot be passed over, and undoubtedly he is already in the pantheon of great names, since from a quantitative point of view he has deserved it. He is more imposing, more monumental than any of his contemporaries, including Skryabin and Debussy. He has never swallowed the bait of refinement, nor been tempted by the great temptation to combine the utmost grandeur with the utmost delicacy. But amidst all these attributes of grandeur and "foresight" he has so many traits of insincerity, of hypocrisy, of the magnificent gesture in stage-property surroundings. His roots are nourished on the trading spirit of the ci-devant victorious Germany. The type of romanticist-idealist which the great Germans

of the past revealed to us is irrecoverably buried by Strauss under the ponderousness of his productions. Banging the big drum, bawling, editorial puffs, an outward show of magnificence, parade—these are his watchwords, and they are no other than a misinterpretation of the Wagner of his last " divine " period. Philosophical profundity of thought, the fashionable pursuit of the symbolical, the mystical, and the " orgiastic " live in harmony with the prosaicism and banality of the city street. It is impossible to find an ideological resultant of the subjects of " Salome," " Elektra " and " Zarathustra " except on the plane of the " effectiveness " of those subjects. And, frankly speaking, Strauss is infinitely remote from Wilde and Hoffmannsthal and Nietzsche—he sees in them nothing more than material for noise and advertisement. He is sincere in " Heldenleben," " Till Eulenspiegel," the " Sinfonia Domestica," and even in " Rosenkavalier," that irruption of the worlds of operetta into a theatrically made-up Zarathustrian soul. Here he is himself, with his ideas, his prose, his primitive tonal " allegorism," with his yearning to translate things and scenes into music. And his grandiosity! As compared with that of the great productions of the past, is not the grandiosity of this present-day titan like that of a twenty-storey building with a lift, or of some Eiffel Tower, in comparison with the majesty of the Sphinx of the Egyptian desert, or of the cathedral of Rheims?

Strauss has said his say, and it is difficult now to look for anything new and fresh from him. At his age (he is sixty) one does not get a revival of creative power. He has passed his culmination and is " setting," though possibly not as the sun of Zarathustra set—to perpetual return. It is already possible to appraise him absolutely, as a full-summed life, so far as such an estimate is accessible to his contemporaries. And here it seems to me that history will rank him amongst the great, despite those negative features of his creative psychology which have been indicated. He will be great for the reason that greatness is nothing but organic harmony with the epoch, a focus reflecting the rays of contemporary thought. And so far as the epoch itself is organic, so far as it is an inevitable link in the historic chain, to that extent its brilliant musical reflection in the type of Strauss-the-hero is organic and inevitable. He is a genuine hero of our days (or of yesterday), and it is not his fault that there are no Nibelungen now, since all of them have formed an alliance with the metallists, and Beethoven's fate is quoted in insurance companies and valued in marks with mathematical accuracy. It is not his fault that his foes are merely miserable critics, who fight with pens, and that the zodiacal circle of the exploits of the new Hercules has been converted into a catalogue of his scores in the " Universal Edition." It is not his fault that we have learned to build pyramids

taller than those of Cheops and hollow within, pyramids that can be taken to pieces, so to speak, that the sounds of the outer world, which with Beethoven were reflected in the Pastoral Symphony, or in the martial rhythms of other of his works, with Strauss have been changed into the echoes of a waltz from a fashionable operetta, while Wagner's orphic leit-motifs have come to resemble motor-horns. Between this world of sensations saturated with industrialism, with the noise of motors and the rattle of trains, and that peaceful and contemplative world in which Beethoven lived and created there is nothing in common. Other rhythms of life, other styles of music. And one must still feel surprise that Strauss has acquired by inheritance from his forefathers a certain share of majestic tranquillity and contemplativeness—qualities in which the new music is, above all, deficient.

LEONID SABANEEV.
trans. by S. W. PRING.

II—MEDTNER

Medtner stands isolated amidst his contemporaries. Strictly speaking, he is not a " contemporary " composer at all—so few of the currents from the psychology of our time find their way into his creative work. He pulls stubbornly and strongly against the stream, against the age, against the advancing phantom, evidently terrible to him, of the new, strange, and incomprehensible art—an art now nerve-wrecking, now prosaically schematised, now the product of the advertising puff.

Perhaps he was born too late and psychically is out of harmony with our age; his is the spirit of the old master, wholly, religiously devoted to and immersed in his art, with a sort of ecstatic detachment from the practical, from all this artistic uproar which suggests a dance of painted corpses. He does not understand and is afraid of this world of glittering prose, the little everyday world decked out in its holiday finery. A musical anchorite and ascetic, in his esthetic solitude he gives himself up to exalted joys, to prayer to the old, native musical gods, for him alive and eternal. . . .

Or he may be a premature prophet of something that is to come in music—that era of the " purification of art," a certain reversion to its previous state, of which, as of the " kingdom of God on earth," Rubenstein and Taneev dreamt—those great conservatives in music, wearied by their incomprehension of the contemporary spirit with its turbulence, its complexity, its shallowness. Skryabin wanted to consume the world in the fires of his creative work. Medtner would restore to it the knowledge of how to pray through tones and in tones

to certain inner deeps, and he sets up a barrier between creation and the world.

If Medtner had been born in Germany his appearance would have been less incomprehensible and amazing, though still more untimely. The age of wonder-workers is past and the coming of a new St. Francis of Assisi would be strange nowadays. Psychologically Medtner is just as incongruous with this age as St. Francis would be. But in Russia Medtner is even more unintelligible than the blossoming forth of the flower of Glinka, so unexpected by the world. Where does he come from? Where are his Russian forefathers? And why is there such a profound abyss between this world of sound and the whole trend of Russian music? It is only by his anachronous artistic "sanctity" that Medtner belongs wholly to Russia, which has not yet forgotten how to perceive the imperceptible, has not outlived an immemorial creative idealism.

It is, of course, possible to point to Medtner's genealogical ancestors amongst Russian composers, and first of all Taneev, who started from the premise that superlative mastery is required of the musician. A great contrapuntal teacher, Taneev built up the whole of his music out of the aspiration to impart a musical mastery "comparable" to that of the West, and he was sorely troubled at the dilettantism of the musical feelings of even our best composers. But in matters philosophical Taneev was a sceptic and a materialist, and as a good rationalist "sexagenarian" he would have liked to reduce the whole of music to a question of skill, to absorb it in the concept of technical perfection. Nevertheless we find in him just those qualities which we see in Medtner: that lofty idealism of the spiritual personality; that devout, uncompromising attitude towards the sanctity of art; that scornfully ascetic aloofness from the musical world, with its blustering, its pirouetting, its quarrelling, and its craving for fame. In addition to his mastery and the cult of mastery, Medtner also derived his sternly ascetic artistic creed from Taneev. Both are alien to their times, both are "sainted" old masters who have buried themselves in a world of their own and will not behold the real world, who hate it and its glory, who see their life and the purpose of their life in the accomplishment of creative work for its own sake, unaccompanied by any fame-bringing "coda"—the unsociable, self-contained Medtner, and Taneev, childishly ignorant of worldly affairs, detesting "waterworks and electricity" equally with the music of new composers, and preferring the water-cart and the kerosene lamp and Bach and Mozart to all the charms of civilisation.

Taneev is Medtner's biggest and most direct ancestor. Medtner is, of course, incomparably the greater, not so much as a personality as

a creative entity. That which Taneev dreamt of being—the priest-guardian of the ancient musical fire, for which he lacked the purely creative consecration—Medtner became; Medtner—the vestal at the altar of music encircled by the sacred names of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. But there are other less important influences; amongst them a little trace of Tchaikovsky, transmitted through Rakhmaninov and, I rather think, through Taneev, but in either case sterilised from the glutinous " gipsy element." And these are nearly all.

On the other hand, the West provides a whole gallery of ancestors. This austere knight is manifestly of Western origin. His forefathers are the whole world-literature of that " priestly " caste. I doubt if any other Russian is a member of so large a musical family. He is a true aristocrat, with the creative blood of the greatest geniuses of tone in his veins—Bach, Handel, the old Frenchmen and Italians, the great classics Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, even Wagner—and it is all acquired at first hand, as it were. Their mastery has passed into the blood of Medtner, who shows himself to be the first absolute master of music in Russia, without any exfoliations of the " dilettantism " displayed in the most gifted, even in Skryabin, even in Taneev himself, in the form of a certain naïve presentation of actual " mastery " in music.

A glance at Medtner immediately suggests a parallelism with the neo-classic Reger. They are cousins, as it were, in the creative genealogies. And from the emotional present with its surfeit of kinetics and movement, with its spasms and convulsions, both of them turn protestingly to the monumental majesty of the past. But a more thoughtful gaze will convince us that the " cousins " are often quite unlike each other. The fact is, Reger's retrospection is a typically suburban, contemporary phenomenon, the phenomenon of a satiated man who has reproduced psychologically all the spasms of suburban art and is now seeking a contrast. But with Medtner (and Taneev) it is the case of the rejection of the contemporaneous. Medtner is innocent, but Reger " has gone through fire and water and copper tubes,"* and has an inclination for " innocence," which, alas! cannot be retrospectively attained. All the while there is a sense of his lapse into sin in the form now of insincerity, now of a certain " snobbery," and his very addiction to neo-classicism agrees too well with the suburban view of life, and even with the advertising spirit so organically intolerable to Medtner.

The new music, in acquiring refined means of expression, new harmonies and rhythms, new moods, has entirely lost one thing—

* A proverb. The reference is to the method by which vodka is distilled, and the application of the proverb to a human being is equivalent to saying that he is a cunning fellow.—(Translator's note.)

majestic contemplativeness and tranquillity. Notwithstanding Medtner's ascetic alienation from the town, its sounds and rhythms penetrate the walls of his Gothic cathedral, in which he prays to his ancient, eternal gods, and unwittingly he reacts to them, transmuting their fantastic resonances into the tissue of his creations. If we compare Medtner with Bach, or even with Brahms, we at once notice a difference in the musical "atmosphere." The "co-efficient of tranquillity" is highest in Bach and lowest in Medtner, in whose music there is a restless element, influenced by the town and the times. Out of this element he moulds the little ornaments and bas-reliefs of his Gothic edifice. The peopling of it with rhythmics is determined by this very irruption of our world into his world. It is true that all these contemporary "devils," fashioned in the Gothic style and skilfully arranged in suitable places, are entirely transformed into his element and even cease to resemble the contemporaneous. Nevertheless his music sometimes reminds one of a room overcrowded with objects small and great, beautiful as they may be. . . . Occasionally it becomes stifling, there is no fresh air, just as in a gloomy oratory. And outside the town presses close, with its dance of death, its clangour, its noisy machinery. Like a mighty magician Medtner successfully holds in check the evils of the town by his exorcisms. Meanwhile all the spirits of the town are dissolved and transmuted in his oratory, but the circle continues to contract.

From thence he descends and ascends—inevitably he becomes "Gothic." His oratory thrusts out a pointed spire and is covered with amazingly-wrought ornamentation, delicate, artistically finished. It is fundamental, massive, but not cyclopean, and like everything Gothic, is full of sharp corners and crossing arches of rhythms, always distinct, never for a moment diffuse, never piled up in the fashion of the present day, nor overrunning each other, but always wise and cleverly economised. The forms of his creative work are more perfect and more complex than those of any of his contemporaries, and the greatness of the whole is only at times obscured by the abundance of the details.

Stern, ascetic, and colourless—such is Medtner. His temples are always constructed of the same granite, hard, durable, grey. His art is graphic (and architecture may be graphic), and he is not a colourist. The charms of sonorousness, and of intoxication by tone, in general, everything sensuous in music, are foreign to him. He works with rhythm and the highest forms of tonal reaction, and not directly by the sensuously-psychological fascination of tone, of tone-harmony, tone-colour.

He has not succeeded in avoiding one contemporary symptom, common in our day—the decline of melos. Medtner is not a

melodist. Having parted company with the conventionally sensuous, emotional melos which would not harmonise with his asceticism, he could not create a competent, self-contained melos independent of harmony and rhythm. His melody is noble and elevated, but even in comparison with Brahms it is abstract: in it the rhythmist vanquishes the artist-melodist. At times his melos has something in common with that of the later Beethoven—the Beethoven whose abandonment of the sensuous tone took the form of abstract musical thinking.

"Unison" is therefore inconceivable for Medtner. He thinks polytonally and polyrhythmically. His music is saturated with sound, at certain times to such an extent that it seems to contain too many "notes." But this abundance of notes is a part of his Gothics. When he reduces their number he reveals a kinship not even with Brahms but with Schubert and the classics. And these simple tunes, dressed in the festal togas of his harmonics, resound with a Wagnerian significance, but lack that freedom, freshness, and breadth which Wagner had the happiness of beholding in his own creative work.

With Wagner you breathe deeply, even when the Bayreuth Klingsor tries to fill the air with intoxicating perfumes. Behind the clouds of incense you are conscious of the boundless vault of the heavens. But in Medtner's Gothic cathedral there is nothing of this, nor can there be, since in that self-same world there is no air. Why does Medtner lack the power to give us air in spite of that sempiternally-consecrated attitude towards art, in spite of the fact that in his attainments he undoubtedly comes very near to ranking as a genius?

I think that the nature of his spiritual attitude in creative work is to blame. Taneev the materialist, a reverent worshipper of art, a man of infinite honour and crystalline morals, could not kindle his creative powers by a considered approach, a rationalist attitude. Medtner is otherwise prevented from soaring to those spheres where the air is free and where there are no "devils" from the town. In him there is much of the "earthy," of the gnomic, of the Nibelung. His numerous "tenebrosos," his distinct rhythmics, his yearning for granite and for crowded collections of musical objects, his lack of air and breadth—all this is of the "Nibelungs." The elfin nature is seen in his legends, in which there is rarely anything of the "fairy," but only of the gnome, the grotesque, and the phantom, in a bottomless fantastic realm of stone and iron—nebulous phantoms, gnomes at the forge, fantastics of animated minerals and other objects. The very Gothic of his creative work is not the Gothic of a religious bent, not a symbol of a tendency, but a sojourning in the depths, a stony, monumental world in which there is a devout attitude towards

art, but no sancitity in the art itself. Heaven knows to what demons this Nibelung prays in his Gothic oratory, hating the light and the world and the things of the present—but it is clear that these demons are by no means always, and perhaps are never, " gods of light." But there is anguish concerning them, since it is possible that Medtner is himself not a Nibelung at all, but only a man who has happened upon their kingdom and, chained in their dungeon, strives for light. The phantoms of the ballads and legends are occasionally tinged by a vision, a dream of a real spring beginning somewhere in another world (the Sonata-Ballada), but every time the funereal oppression of the fetters of brass returns and lies athwart the world of spring and the terrible Nibelung grotesques work in once more from every side. The great struggle for light goes on : with his abysmal nature Medtner understands chaos and is sensitive to the nocturnal soul of Tyuchev, but he is attracted to the lucid Pushkin, to the bright Appolinian vision. For this he has no light within himself—he is a nocturnal and subterranean soul and through the harmonious lucidity of Pushkin's rhythmics there peers the anxious gaze of the Nibelung, who knows too much and whose extensive knowledge has given him a tragic experience of the world. Medtner's Gothic cathedral has not soared so high above the earth, but he with the whole kingdom has descended into the depths and from thence come the unceasing legends of the underworld and the anguished, impulsive efforts to attain eternal light and the spring.

Genius? This term has already been used in connection with him, and not by myself alone. Of contemporary composers Medtner—the profoundest, the wisest, the sternest, the most luminous in respect of creative work—will survive many who now pluck the flowers of fame and are quoted on the Stock Exchange of genius. He has passed into the future. In the course of time millions of treasure which we cannot appreciate now will be unearthed from his subterranean vaults. His development will continue and will be even greater than that which we have already witnessed. But the " unbeneficence " of his music will continue; his spirit is filled with unsubjugated demons, incomprehensible to him although he is a very wise man. Skryabin found his good and it, too, was not what he ought to have found—not what he would have wished to find. But there is more depth in Medtner than in Skryabin, he was not satisfied with a substitute and spatially he is farther from the " world " than Skryabin, who remained essentially in close proximity to it. Skryabin was the elemental spirit of fire and air—in him were the elements of the elf and the salamander; in Debussy the undine, the element of water, predominates; Medtner is the gnome, the profoundest and wisest of them all. But they are essentially " unbeneficent," like all elemental

spirits, and in the world of their creation there is no real humanity—such as was given in the highest degree to Beethoven, who patiently endured his creative genius.

To-day the colossal figure of Medtner is seen as a strange and solitary silhouette on the Russian horizon. Whatever he may have inherited from Taneev, there is so little that is Russian and typical in his work and so much that is characteristically German. There is nothing of the Russian melos, the Russian rhythms, no tendency towards the sensuous tone and the colouring so distinctive of Russian tonal ideas, none of the emotionalism, the Russian "tenseness" which emanates from the gipsy element and the folk-lyrics. His roots are not in us but in Germany. There his kindred are easily recognised. His idols are Brahms, the "bungler" rejected by the Russian ideology; Wagner, in his "Dionysiac," non-magical, and structural aspect; and the later works of Beethoven which (let the sin be confessed) were not less foreign to the Russian comprehension than that same Brahms. On the other hand, everything that has been the cult of Russian music since its rise—colour, descriptiveness, emotionalism—all this is repudiated by Medtner's creative work. He is thereby the more valuable, as a protest against and an antidote to the one-sidedness of the previous tendencies. The effects of this antidote have already begun to appear; in the new generation of musicians "Medtnerism" (thus or otherwise designated) is sometimes very distinctly manifest in the arousing of an interest in rhythmics; in the deviation of the Chopin-Liszt-Skryabin path in the direction of Brahms, Schumann and Beethoven; in a certain "classicisation" of mood; and, lastly, in the ever-growing cult of a genuine mastery. Medtner has played a very honourable part in the process (now accomplished) of freeing Russian music from dilettantism.

We are now passing through a period of the revaluation of previous bases and qualifications. Much that seemed perfect and absolute has proved and is proving to be naïve and immature. Of all the Russian composers Medtner seems to be the ripest, the most complete in that section of creative work which, as historical experience shows, is most capable of sustaining the struggle with time. Hence his compositions would appear to be impressed with the seal of eternity, which is sometimes so difficult to divine in our living contemporaries.

LEONID SABANEEV.

Trans. by S. W. PRING.

These articles appeared in No. 2 of the Russian magazine "K Novym Beregam Muzykalnogo Iskusstva" (To the New Shores of the Musical Art), edited by V. M. Belaiev and Vl. Derzhanovsky.

CONCERT AUDIENCES

An audience, so the dictionary tells us, is an assembly of hearers. Experience, however, tells us a great deal more than that. It tells us, amongst other things, that an audience consists of two classes of people, those who sit and listen, and those who simply sit. This latter class, being so painful to contemplate, I will discuss first and then, having done my disagreeable duty, I will turn to the pleasurable task of discussing the former.

Those who simply sit, then, are all the countless visitors to our concert-halls, who go there for some purpose other than for enjoying or enduring the music. Their reasons for going are many, and doubtless to the psycho-analyst, an examination of these reasons would reveal some complexes, horrible and hideous in their interpretation. But I know nothing of complexes and I shall offer reasons for the attendance at concerts of non-music-lovers without reference to things psychic or unseen.

When I classify these people as those who simply sit, I have done some of them too much justice. Sit they do, but they sit to see, or to be seen of, men. The most complete and unspoiled example of such a spectatorial audience is to be found at a school concert to which there roll up in their hundreds, parents, guardians, aunts, uncles and interested friends who have come to see John sing and Michael play. But in every audience there will always be a sprinkling of those who sit to see; who have heard that some local person is to perform, and they are anxious to see how somebody whom they know as a human being looks and behaves when raised to the giddy height of a star. These star-gazers flock in thousands to hear the latest arrival into the limelight of fashionable approval. Obedient to the commands of fashion, this crowd of non-listeners attend recitals at the Albert Hall to hear the delicious playing of so-and-so, and fight their way into Queen's Hall to hear a performance of the much-talked-of such-and-such. They are bored to death at each concert, but they console themselves with the reflection that they have seen *him* whom all their friends have wished to see, and they have heard *that* which all their friends have felt obliged to hear, and in consequence they are among the elect. These sight-seers have no desire to be ennobled by the great men whom they flock to see; amiable Herods merely, who having heard of some outstanding man, are

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anxious to see some miracle performed by him! They wish to see him whom all men are talking about, and whom they will forget as soon as some new sensation occupies their minds.

" So Christ once passed while crowds around Him swelled,
Who saw in Him the truth of their belief;
They flaunted palms, with ecstasy they yelled
And then renounced Him for a common thief."

That great artists fail to live up to their reputations when faced with such audiences is no occasion for surprise, because who can speak intimately of grave and spiritual matters to those who have no wish to hear them? Who can play a Bach violin sonata to a crowd of ten thousand spectators who have come because they have heard you dash off an elegant trifle on a gramophone record? It is impossible, because no one can give his best unless he knows that he is understood and that his most delicate touches are instantly appreciated. Everyone has had to suffer at one time or another from being asked to play in unsympathetic surroundings—either the guests have dined to an advanced stage of somnolence, or the piano has declined to an advanced stage of tin-pottery. Feebly, and with a sickly sense of unconvincing mendacity we declare that we are out of practice. The excuse is not allowed. Our host cries, " Oh, do play something; we shan't notice your mistakes." We begin to play. At the opening chords, all the guests assume expressions of melancholia, self-conscious piety, or acute dyspepsia. Then, at a nod from the hostess, they re-shuffle their faces, and conversation becomes general. Do they notice our mistakes? Of course not; they hear nothing. How then is it possible to give a good performance of anything in such surroundings? Why linger over that lovely passage? Why exert ourselves to fury over that climax, when we know that the guests are silently (sometimes not even silently) longing for the music to stop? Alas! the gigantic audiences, though they are the reward of fame, tend to destroy, or at least to spoil, the very fame which they fondly imagine that they admire.

Let us now turn to the less numerous, but more important class of concert-goers—those who sit and listen. This class has to be subdivided into two groups—those who listen with prejudice and those who listen with an open mind. The prejudiced listener considers himself the salt of the earth, and like the Pharisee of old, he stands before his little shrine and thanks his stars that he is not as other men are, Beethoven-lovers, Chopin-lovers, or even a Mendelssohn-lover. The unprejudiced listener, the modest Sadducee (to me, as a child it always seemed a natural thing for a man who beat upon his breast

to be called a Sadducee) prides himself upon no such superiority to other men, but beats upon his hands, and is grateful for the work of all men if it stirs his blood, nor is he too harsh in his judgments when Homer nods, as nod he sometimes will.

The prejudiced listener is generally a self-conscious, clever, narrow-minded man, who can only admire one thing at a time. He glories in his limitations, fondly imagining that by fixing his gaze rigidly upon the North he is using his eyesight better than the man who turns his eyes through all the points of the compass. If it so happens that William Byrd is the hero of the moment, he worships Byrd, asserting that his great service surpasses the "B minor Mass," the "Messiah" and all other sacred works written since that day. Or if it happens that X. Stravagansky is the hero of the moment, he admits no composer dead or living, to be his peer, emphatically stating that X. Stravagansky's concerto for piccolo and eight euphoniums surpasses all the orchestral works of Wagner or Beethoven, as the Himalayas surpass the Andes or the Alps. Little does he think that the hated and despised Sadducee has loved Byrd's music equally with that of Beethoven ever since he was a child, and that because he has always loved it he does not feel obliged to boast about it. The prejudiced listener, anxious to prove his admiration for his particular hero, not only builds him a shine of extravagant proportions, but destroys or attempts to destroy all other existing shrines, and heaps abuse and insults upon the pilgrims who wish to worship at the shrines which he would like to see destroyed. Thus, at concerts, the prejudiced listener will sit through the work of his hero with a carefully studied expression of rapt admiration, but when it is over and some trifle of Mendelssohn is played (say the "Hebrides" or the "Midsummer Night's Dream" overture) he will display his superiority and betray his ill-breeding by yawning and by gazing vacantly about the room, distracting and annoying those more fortunate people who can love both roses and lilies, and who can admire Rubens without despising Rembrandt.

Do these people really imagine that their exclusive admiration of one man does that one man's reputation any lasting good, or that their particular hero would be gratified to receive the praises of someone who can find nothing to praise in the work of Bach and Beethoven? To be praised by a man who can see no merits in that which is universally admitted to be meritorious can only be interpreted as an insult or, at least, as a back-handed compliment. On the other hand, to be praised by those who sincerely admire the work of other men is sweet and soothing to the ear. If the man who knows and judiciously admires the songs of Schubert can find fresh admiration for the songs of you and me, then you and I have reason to be

pleased because our songs have, algebraically-speaking, been praised to the power of Schubert.

The unprejudiced listener, the Sadducee, is, on his own confession, entirely unmusical. He has no knowledge of music, but simply likes what he likes in a generous, indiscriminating way. His judgments are frequently interesting, because they are individual. He loves the "Messiah" and the "Elijah." He likes a great deal of the "B minor Mass," but confesses that he finds the first "Kyrie" too long and that, to him, its intensity is lessened as it proceeds, as a bonfire is quenched by excess of fuel. He is Philistine enough to prefer Beethoven's fifth or seventh Symphony to the choral Symphony, although he has been told frequently that the choral Symphony is Beethoven's greatest achievement. He is generous and sympathetic to all composers and performers, because he has no unaccommodating theories of technique, but because he has no theories of technique he just fails to appreciate the most subtle effects of a performance, or of a composition.

What, then, is the perfect audience? Not the superficially interested spectators for they applaud what is bad, ignore what is good, and in the end destroy reputations of many years' standing. Nor is it the lecture-trained appreciators who have been told what to admire, and who trust to the guidance of the lecturer rather than to their own sensibilities, thus transforming themselves from despised Sadducees into despicable Pharisees. Nor is it eminent composers or performers, because these distinguished persons never go to concerts at which they are not appearing unless they go to convince themselves that the other fellow's music or playing is as bad as they hoped it would be. No, the perfect audience does not exist, though each one of us knows that it might exist if only a large number of people would think and feel exactly as we do, or as did Anne Elliot (need I explain that she adorns Jane Austen's last great novel "Persuasion"?), who "was in a favourable state for the entertainment (concert) of the evening; she had feelings for the tender; spirits for the gay; attention for the scientific and patience for the wearisome." If, then, every concert was attended by a multiplication of ourselves or of Anne Elliot, we should at last be the one, perfect, long-despaired-of audience, full of deep feelings for the tender; high spirits for the gay; careful attention for the scientific, and inexhaustible patience for the wearisome—in fact, we should be the last word in sympathy, intelligence and appreciation.

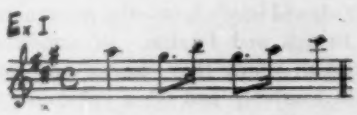
ALEXANDER BRENT SMITH.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON BIRD MUSIC
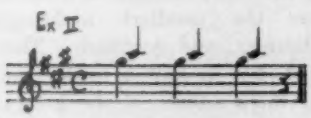
For many years I have been looking for the musico-ornithologist who would devise a practical scheme for the interpretation or the understanding of the songs of birds. The thing does not seem to me to have been effectively done in English, nor have I come across anything much to the point in translation. I cannot attempt it myself, though birds and music have been chief corner-stones of my life.

Lately I have been in the company of a small delicately-vested bird with a coral beak and a sweet voice. About the size of a greenfinch, he is, but with finer lines, of an olive hue, marked here and there with carmine and orange. He is said to come from China.

When he is feeling comfortable about things, and I whistle *something like*



he will respond with *something like*



And we may be heard to change parts. If I sing my part out of course, he will often rebuke me with a rapid chuckle of annoyance and sometimes he will combine the two phrases. I think, however, that, roughly speaking, the phrases as indicated, are the basis of his artistry. He moves the " notes " about and he shades them to suit his purpose. And, of course, my indications are, as they say, the merest. The diatonic notes, on a keyed instrument, are " not a bit like " what one hears from the coral beak. *That* recalls to me

something of a blackbird singing in a College garden, where the best blackbirds are to be heard; and I think they know the acoustic value of gray stone walls and towers surrounding.

To some extent my little bird and I seem to be in a sort of tonal sympathy. But I recognise that this sympathy, or understanding, is outside *music*, and I wonder about it. Perhaps he wonders too. For our situation is rather as if the Eiffel Tower should hum a bar or so of something—say, " Frère Jacques "—and I should respond with a few more notes of the song in an approximate key.

Before exposing this wonder of mine any further, I must somehow meet the challenge: What do you know about either music or the songs of birds?

It is ignorance in myself that I realise, and not knowledge, especially since I put pen to paper. But this at least I can offer, in support of my excuse that nobody seemed to be doing anything and I wanted to stir up the competent authority. Having been bred with a reasonably musical ear, I have vocally and instrumentally, actively and passively, employed it with some enthusiasm for half a century. And I was bred up from his knee by my father in the idea that birds and the ways of them were among the things that made life best worth living. I know pretty well what a door was shut when he could no longer hear their seasonable notes. Beyond that, I have studied—and study should imply love—the utterances of a considerable variety of birds, British and foreign, in conditions of tempered captivity—conditions in which they throve, and compatible not only with song, but with courtship and other sub-conscious manifestations of well-being in no small measure.

Before the war I had a collection of rough notes, especially of the birds I could best study, but these have disappeared. Perhaps it is the moment to record here the names of those that to my ear sang sweetest. They were the woodlark, nightingale, garden-warbler, black-cap, linnet, wheatear, and goldfinch. Their names will recur before I have finished, but in case a reader can go no farther, let her at least tell over those names, if she knows their songs; or go soberly a-field (with a lute or a pitch-pipe rather than a Klaxon horn) and fall to listening.

Naturally, I had often wished to convey to a friendly ear some resemblance of what had so delighted and made happy my own. Certain " cries " (as distinct from songs), and in some few cases phrases of songs, one learnt to whistle or fiddle, to imitate. But practically nothing could be conveyed by reference to our diatonic scale notation.

It is not for me to declare that, with a few pretty well recognised

exceptions, no bird's song—or speech, or whatever it is—can be expressed in tones of our musical notation. But so I strongly suspect. And I want somebody, now that, as I understand, our diatonic system is undergoing Promethean and Protean experiences in younger hands, to be inspired to bring together again the birds and ourselves. For I think we must have set out together.

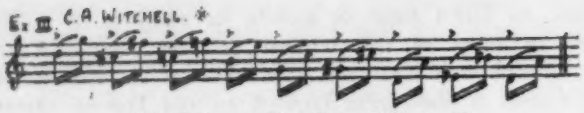
Such endeavourers in that way as I have met—Bechstein,* W. Warde Fowler, C. A. Witchell, Professor Garstang, are names that readily occur to a musico-ornithologist—do, indeed convey to me, who have heard the notes, a reminder of them, dismembered bones and shreddy raiment of wraiths. But to do even this they have to syllabise and employ printed prose or verse, whether or not musical script is added to these. And I doubt very much whether they convey to A, who has " an ear," or to B, who has not, but none the less can tell the songs of birds—anything at all by any means but the syllable and the printed words, except it be as reminders. I would withdraw from my doubt phenomena like the cuckoo call-notes, some notable chance utterances of, *e.g.*, blackbirds, and the imitations of human music achieved by arch-mimics like parrots, bullfinches, starlings, and so on. Mimicry shall be touched upon presently.

Here may come the objections that great musicians—even Haydn, Beethoven and Wagner—have introduced " bird music " into their compositions; that Sir Hubert Parry in an early number of MUSIC AND LETTERS recorded by the medium of our musical notation some most interesting and intelligible observations on the cuckoo. To these I can only reply that, for the first, such " bird music " is, to my hearing, as unlike the music of birds as chalk is unlike cheese; and, for the second, that I have already excepted the cuckoo who, whatever she may be musically is something of a byword and a runagate among birds and men.

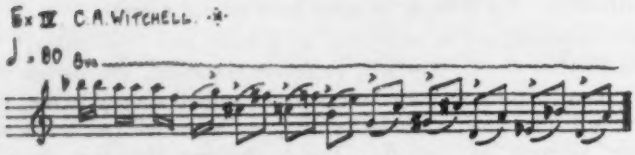
Passing by many side-issues of interest, *e.g.*, the instances in which by lips, palate, hands, knockings, and ingenious mechanisms we may to some extent reproduce bird-notes " purely well," so as, in fact, to deceive them—just as some of them may reproduce music in our scale, I will try to present my difficulty by means of quotation from the writers I have named.

Of the four authors, only in three can I find a pretty exact parallel —the song of the Willow-wren. This is readily audible in spring over the whole country and even, nowadays, in town-parks. It is constant in character, and easily recognisable for its form. The Willow-wren, then :—

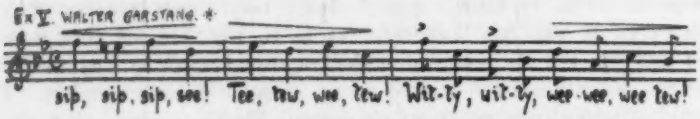
* *Chamber and Cage Birds*, Bechstein, translated by Shuckard, 1871.



* Evolution of Bird Song, 1896, p. 52.



* Cries and Call-Notes of Wild Birds, 1899, p. 51.



* Songs of the Birds, 1922, p. 78.

Ex. VI. W. WARDE FOWLER.*

Beginning with a high and tolerably full note, he drops it both in force and pitch in a cadence short and sweet, as though he were getting exhausted with the effort; for that it *is* a real effort to him and all his slim and tender relations, no one who watches and listens can have a reasonable doubt. This cadence is often perfect, by which I mean that it descends gradually, not of course on the notes of our musical scale, by which no birds in their natural state would deign to be fettered, but through fractions of one or perhaps two of our tones, and without returning upwards at the end; but still more often, and especially, as I fancy, after they have been here a few weeks, they take to finishing with a note nearly as high in pitch as that with which they began.

*A Year with the Birds, 3rd Edn., 1889, p. 48.

Of the above examples, in my judgment both Witchell and Garstang may fairly be represented by their musical notation, without their letterpress. Witchell might have worked out a more valuable statement had his life not been cut short. The copy of his " Evolution of Bird Song " which I have was a review-copy marked by Warde Fowler, a rather precious possession. Garstang's book goes beyond Witchell's in that the assistance of clever and sometimes very apposite verses is offered with the music-script. But for me numbers iv. and vi. are the happiest.

The names of Thomas Nashe, John Clare, G. M. Hopkins and James Stephens among poets intimate with birds, will have occurred to the bird-lovers, who will find their choice things in this kind laid up in " Poems about Birds " (H. J. Massingham and J. C. Squire), as well as the scattered inspirations of even greater names, and the endeavours of some anonymous. And one recalls the very

shrewd mimicry in Aristophanes' "Birds." But these makers all relied upon words and syllables, and come not directly into my problem.

I realise, of course, that one man's problem may be another woman's alphabet. But if I may still present it as a problem (without, alas, being competent to define its nature precisely), I would like to put down certain things that to me have become salients of my tentative position.

1. Our diatonic notation, even when the pitch seems to agree, is rarely applicable to the "cries," and even less so to the "songs" of the more readily conversable British birds.
2. A person with no "musical ear" *can* distinguish accurately the notes of many birds, and in some cases can imitate them successfully.
3. The pitch and rhythm of bird-song in each species tends to be constant in a noticeable degree, inclining strongly to absoluteness.
4. In cases of mimicry between birds, the pitch of the notes imitated may be, and often is, quite different from that of the mimic's own characteristic utterance. The starling is a good and available example.
5. Some bird-notes, and especially songs, contain simultaneous and/or accompanying over-notes and under-notes. These are often inaudible, as such, except at very close quarters, but they presumably affect the typical character and quality of the song. The blackcap, lesser white-throat and the curlew (in its soaring crescendo spring-song) are instances in mind.
6. Forms of song seem to be :—
   (*a*) Idiosyncratic, as those of the chaffinch and the linnet among finches.
   (*b*) Typical of species or genus, as those of the nightingale, garden-warbler and wheatear; chanticleer, pheasant and grouse.
7. Mimicry is more extensive and exact between different species and genera of birds than is known perhaps to the musician as distinguished from the ornithologist. I have even heard and watched a bird with so fine a song as the tree-pipit rehearsing, as it were, the chaffinch song—one which is, as it seems to me, wholly different in genre from its own. Writing unscientifically, I am tempted by the idea that in this business of mimicry may be found some clue leading to the co-ordination of birds' and man's music.

8. A rough classification of bird-songs, according to the writer's idea, may possibly be of interest, if not of service, to someone else.

(*a*) The song beautiful in sound and musical in form: as of the blackbird, thrush, nightingale, curlew, blackcap, wood-pigeon, and perhaps linnet.

(*b*) The song beautiful in sound but not musical in form: as of the garden-warbler, robin, woodlark, goldfinch, redshank, skylark, peewit, and perhaps linnet.

(*c*) The song of less beauty than interest, but exhibiting a well-defined form: as of the chaffinch, yellow-hammer and perhaps wren.

(*d*) The song of little beauty, apart from association, but of much interest: as of the bullfinch, rook, partridge, starling, and perhaps grouse—and scores of others.

The amateur of music and birds who is moved to try to relate the songs of birds to our musical notation will have her work cut out. They may have been rather intimately related at the beginning, but no doubt evolution has had its way with both feathered and featherless bipeds. She will find a great variety of beautiful occasions. None perhaps more strikingly so than a "charm" of say a score of linnets, singing in chorus on a still sunny autumn afternoon. But she must find the right thorn-bush! The effect is of an inchoate (to me) yet wholly beautiful medley of tiny wood-wind players. Chance-medley, if you will, but wholly beautiful. Your nightingale will make you on a sudden the noise of a little cross-grained fiend; but the linnet has no unseemly note in his gamut. Burns knew his "lintie" well.

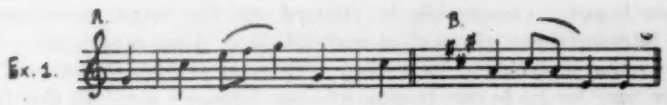
I must conclude with apologies to the musicians and to the scientists for my inadequacy; and to the birds for what may be, after all, an intrusion. If I have not avoided dogmatism, it is not for lack of wishing to beware it. Birds are always a happy surprise, and in respect of them one is wise never to be absolute.

If my problem is found to be only a mare's-nest, well, there is no close-season for mare's-nesting, though, thank goodness, the real nest-builders are better protected nowadays, so that the musician may hear the songs of almost all I have named without much difficulty. And if it is a problem, then a good, *ad hoc*, all-round woman, or even a man, might find a key. The present writer's bunch is too small—the members thereof are old-fashioned, clogged and rusty. But he loves the music on both sides of the door, and he would like to have helped a little to open it. For opened it will be, and the linnets will admit musicians of their "charms" one of these days.

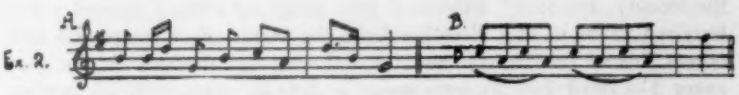
W. Murray Marsden.

THE SONG OF THE BLACKBIRD

When I went to stay at Sidcot in March, 1925, I wondered what was the matter with the blackbirds, and felt strangely uncomfortable about them until I discovered that they were singing different phrases from those with which I was familiar at Compton Bishop, three miles away. This fact interested me greatly and I thought I would try and write them down. Two phrases I remembered having heard at Compton stood out distinctly—I wrote them from memory. They all sound an octave higher than written.

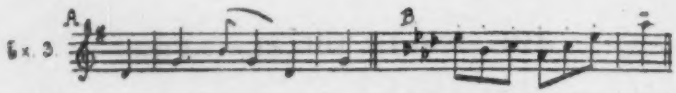


Quite different were the two dominant phrases which soon became familiar at Sidcot :—



My field of observation was limited to within a few hundred yards of the garden and I have since realised that these phrases belonged to one blackbird only—the dominant spirit of the immediate neighbourhood. But at the time I wondered if each locality had its distinctive song—whether all Compton Bishop blackbirds sang phrases 1 A and B, while all Sidcot blackbirds sang 2 A and B, mixed up with a great deal of song that had no particular character and could not possibly be written down. I thought it would be interesting to find out whether this were so, and determined to keep my ears open when I got to Street, 20 miles from Sidcot. I was not disappointed, for on my first evening there a blackbird perched on the silver birch just outside my window, and his song was entirely different from either of the other two I had observed, though, like them, it was based on the common chord and was composed of two main phrases interspersed with a great deal of other material which at first seemed at random and without character, though I afterwards

discovered that this was not so. I named the bird " Silver " and his phrases were these :—



In the days which followed I had ample opportunity for observing his song and making careful notes. As I listened and recorded* day by day I was amazed to find that the song had a plan. It consisted of the two main phrases given, which were repeated at intervals, and on which the wonderful little musician improvised freely and endlessly, shortening or lengthening, combining the two, slightly rearranging the intervals, changing the pitch, now introducing trills and shakes, now calling " oh-ee, oh-ee! " (a call with which he often began). Occasionally he plunged into the minor; more rarely he introduced new phrases† or imitated those of his neighbours. He was never in a hurry, but paused at the end of each phrase as if to give time for its beauty to sink into the listener's ear. In this free improvisation he also varied the way in which he expressed the set phrases, and while keeping the order of the notes unchanged would change the quality of tone, the rhythm, the tempo, or the pitch, giving endless interest. I soon discovered that this was no song of the locality, but just " Silver's " own song; for when I walked a few hundred yards in any direction from the house other songs and still others floated on the air, and the dazzling fact dawned on me that every blackbird has its own song; a definite song with an outline which can be learned and recognised. It is not a mere random thing, but obeys fixed laws and proceeds in an orderly manner despite its seeming abandon; it is a song with the elements of permanence and change, of unity and variety.

I had other birds under observation and though I did not listen to these so closely I was able to distinguish their two pet phrases and to get some of their variations.

The range of notes in the blackbird's song I found to be about two octaves.



* Usually by immediate reference to the piano, or, when that was not possible, by the use of a pipe.

† At the end of April two of these became permanently incorporated in the song, adding greatly to the interest and variety.

Intervals used are those of the common chord, the major third, perfect fourth and fifth which are by far the most popular. Next comes the minor third, and intervals of the second, sixth and seventh, with more occasional leaps of an octave, are common—in fact, all the usual intervals occurring in the diatonic scale are frequently used. The pitch is changed continually. This means, of course, that he has command of all the chromatic notes as well within his compass. He usually sings diatonically, but does sometimes use chromatic notes. On the same day within ten minutes or less he will sing the same song in several keys. (See reconstruction of Studleigh's song.) Although this is so, he is not fond of conjunct passages, much preferring leaps of a third, fourth or fifth. When he does use conjunct passages he often makes a little rush, generally upwards, as if he were afraid of the middle note which is rarely articulated clearly. His minor mode is the æolian.

All this interested me greatly. The more I listened the more convinced I became that I had found the clue to the understanding of the blackbird's song. The fact that it is built on two or more themes makes it extremely unlikely that any two birds would sing exactly the same song though one continually hears similar phrases from different birds.

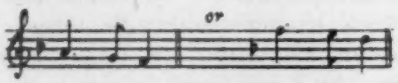
Occasionally one bird echoes another. On May 3, early in the morning, " Silver " was singing outside my window, and in the pauses between his phrases a bird answered in the distance, and twice the phrases were an exact copy of " Silver's." On May 7 I again heard the same kind of answering, but the phrases were more often alike and several times canoned one into the other in a most delightful way.

Individual birds vary greatly in their musical capacity, some having phrases which are arresting and beautiful and full of character, while others are relatively characterless. The quality of tone varies too. Each neighbourhood seems to have one bird who is a better musician than his neighbours, having greater richness of tone, greater beauty of melody and more ease in expression. This dominant musician gives character to the bird music of that particular locality, and this is probably what led me at first to suppose that the song varied with the locality, instead, as is the case, with individual birds.

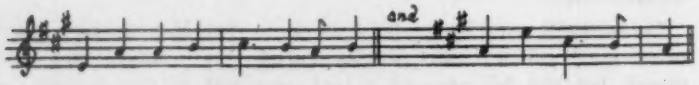
Note.—It has been pointed out to me, and I am quite aware of the fact, that judged according to our musical scales blackbirds often sing out of tune. But they also often sing well in tune. " Silver " and " Apple Blossom " especially were able to give their phrases in almost perfect tune, though they did not always do so. As a beginner I find it better to write correct to the nearest semitone, though later I hope to indicate quarter tones.

FURTHER NOTE.—April, 1926. A larger field of observation this year obliges me to modify some of the above statements. I have constantly heard three and sometimes four consecutive notes both up and down the scale. Some birds do not appear to change pitch, though it is difficult to tell, for they will sometimes sing for twenty minutes at one pitch, and then change it. Also, some seem to have only one phrase and very few variations, and some sing, as far as my ear can judge, quite out of our musical scales. " Silver " (whose life came to a tragic end last June) is by far the best songster I have observed.

My first idea that particular localities had particular songs may not be entirely wrong. I know of a locality where four birds each have

Ex. 5. 

as part of one of the main phrases, and they are very difficult to distinguish. I give two:

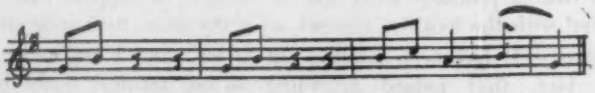
Ex. 6 

That little phrase certainly gives character to the song of that locality. The whole subject is full of interest and will bear investigation.
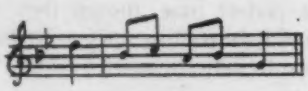
I know a blackbird who sings

Ex. 7. 

and another, which was being chased by his companions, I traced from one place to another, and then to a third, by his song:

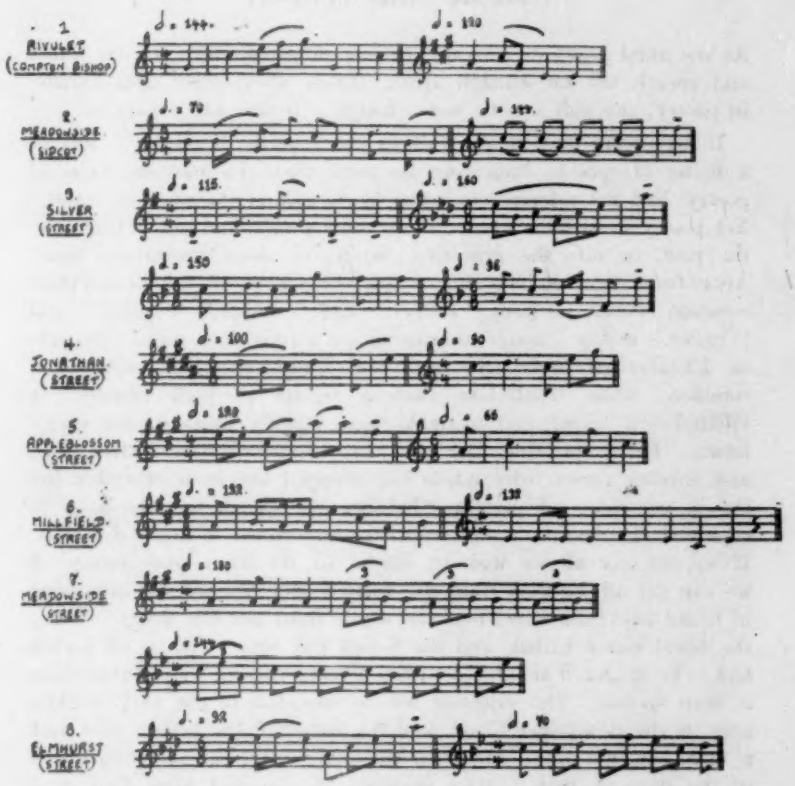
Ex. 8. 

and once I heard him sing:

Ex. 9 

Chief phrases of blackbirds' songs heard in North Somerset, spring, 1925. They sound an octave higher than written.

Ex. 10



GLADYS PAGE WOOD.

MUSIC AND SPEECH

As the mind grows its activities become differentiated. To-day music and speech are far enough apart. Even where they approximate, in poetry, the gulf can be wide enough. It was not always so.

It may seem that we can talk of the " music of poetry " only as a figure of speech, indicating no more than the pleasant noise of poetry, and not referring to a fact as we talk of the mica in granite. Yet poetry is really a music; if we trace poetry and music back into the past, or into the primitive, we travel along converging lines. Apart from their intrinsic relationship our vocabulary still shows their common origin; we have " sonnet " and " sonata," " ballad " and " ballet," and a " song " means either a tune or a poem. So late as Elizabethan times, the arts had forms like the madrigal in common, while troubadour stanzas belong to both equally. A villanelle, a triolet and a rondo were equally musical and poetic forms. Before printing, the arts were necessarily closer than now, and another reason why music has dropped out from everyday life lies in our more adequate vocabulary. As speech becomes fitter to cope with the desires of expression, the importance of music dwindles If we can say all we wish in words, we do not require music; if we can get all we wish from the written arts, we are not interested in heard ones; the novel banishes music from our idle hours. Once, the novel was a ballad, and the ballad was sung. When all poetry had to be rendered aloud, song made a more natural way of rendering it than speech. The minstrel was as essential to the early middle ages as the newspaper to us, and the minstrel was both a poet and a musician, not more one than the other. Earlier still—wasn't it in the days of Bede?—they despised an educated man, that is a monk, who could not sing and compose a song; and a song meant a poem as well as a tune. The farther back we go the more commonplace becomes music, a breakfast companion, so to speak, and not a concert star. Once upon a time the Kings of England wrote music. The halo of romance round Richard I takes deeper colouring because he was both poet and musician, but Henry VIII, whom we accuse neither of romance nor of sentimentality, who was fat and practical, wrote music which is still sung. And so back we go till Plato could define an educated man as one trained to sing in a chorus, or till we come where everyone composes their own songs, as musical children do, not to mention the natives of the Andaman Islands.

So in our backward course music becomes more essential and poetry creeps nearer it, till we arrive where we can no longer separate them, and the only poetry is song. If we go but a little further, not only poetry and music, but speech and music become indistinguishable, or very difficult to distinguish. Then a curious problem arises. Did speech develop out of music, or did music come from speech, or did they start together from a pre-music, pre-speech ancestor, and become differentiated only later? Just as we do not find rhythm existing before melody, though we find them apart, or melody before rhythm, and though we may differentiate them, cannot say one grew out of the other, so, far back in distant psychology perhaps speech had no pre-music existence nor music a pre-speech, but both were parts of the same thing.

This problem did not arise among theorists. It presented itself at the suggestion of observed facts. The discussion, it seems to me, attempts to solve two problems, which have been tackled simultaneously and as if they were the same. Before we set out to discover whether speech arose from music or music from speech, we must determine where the difference lies. We may do this in at least two ways, one according to their subjective aim or purpose, the other by their intrinsic objective difference. Although Mr. Wallaschek,* like many others, clouds his reasoning by confusing the two, he tends rather to the first distinction. He says:—

> "We can see in almost all the examples furnished by ethnology that music is the expression of emotion. There is no doubt that emotion is one . . . of the sources of human language. . . . Music is an expression of emotion, speech the expression of thought. . . . Many cases of aphasia prove† that an expression cannot be emotional and intellectual at the same time, the one kind of expression arising in and spreading through different parts of the brain and nervous system from those occupied by the other. It may be, however, that in a very primitive stage of mental development thought and emotion have not yet become clearly differentiated . . . music and speech did not arise the one from the other, but . . . both arose from (or together with) an identical primitive stage in one of their common elements."

This final conclusion is probably the right one. It is almost certainly right that in primitive mentality, thought and emotion are not differentiated; but the deduction from the aphasia case is risky.

* *Primitive Music.*

† He does not say how.

Doesn't the point in aphasia consist in its abnormality, partly in the abnormality that thought and emotion do not work together, that the portion of the brain that expresses one, is atrophied? That abnormally emotion and thought can be disunited does not prove that normally they can never be simultaneous. Nor does Wallaschek define the end of speech and music safely. Both music and speech can, and do, convey emotion, and perhaps music, too, can convey thought. We may differentiate between them more truthfully by saying that in speech we use sounds to convey meaning or emotion, in music (which in the primitive includes poetry, it being always sung) to express that quality in life which we call its poetry. When weighted down with this significance or elated by this consciousness, the musician writes. Whereas inward necessity occasions the outpouring of emotion we call music, utilitarian or outward necessity occasions speech. The artistic or musical necessity comes from some deep part of our being; speech is a surface thing made necessary by the facts of our environment.

We must determine whether the artistic or the utilitarian is the motive in Nature's song. Is the blackbird's song speech or music? Is it a declaration of love, a revel in lovely sound for its own sake, or in his primitive " psyche " is the declaring of his love the same thing as the unburdening of his ideal or beauty yearning impulses? Wallaschek says that bird song is not music but speech, and points out that gregarious birds are garrulous, solitary species silent. Mr. Garstang,* on the other hand, tells us that though gregarious birds chatter, " a certain isolation or aloofness " is necessary for song. Starlings, as he points out, sometimes sing if they are solitary, never otherwise. Wallaschek calls every sound a bird makes its song, and since some bird sounds are not music, concludes that none is. He does not consider what Garstang assumes, that a bird may both speak and sing. To prove one origin, he refers to Mr. Witchell's statement that the call note or song and the danger cry of birds originate from the same sounds. But Witchell was only proving his case; this is his idea rather than his observation. Wallaschek says further:

> " If the third frontal convolution in the bird's brain is stimulated by an electric current the bird begins to ' sing.' Now this third frontal convolution is the *speech*-centre on which our musical faculty does not at all depend."

This is interesting; it might prove almost anything. If we take bird song as speech because of this experiment, and remember that

* *The Songs of Birds.*

the blackbird's speech sounds like our music, it will prove that music arose from speech. If we refuse to believe that the blackbird's song is speech, it will prove that speech arose from music, or that speech and music once inhabited the same house, were part of the same mental process. But it need not even prove a connection. The skin, speaking loosely, of the most primitive animals acts as their eyes and ears; but this does not mean either that our hearing grew out of our sight, or our sight from our hearing. My recollections of Wundt tell me that as the brain evolves, the mental processes proceed to new apartments. Man and dog do not necessarily use the same part of the brain to carry through the same mental act. The difference is much more physiological than psychological. Still it is interesting that our speech-centre should grow out of what is the melody producing centre in the bird, that perhaps in primitive brains melody and speech come out from the same depôt —not that we did evolve from birds; we were only reptiles together. But we must remember that an electric current is not a psychological motive. If my right hand were stimulated with a red hot poker I should probably scream, but this would not mean that the screaming agent of my mind were situated in my right hand. Suppose birds sing because they are happy, and suppose having an electric current passed through one's speech-centre makes one feel hilariously joyful; then the bird's song, being psychologically and not physically conditioned, would express excitement. Normally the song-centre comes into action by a volition which need not emanate from the song-centre and probably does not. A bird may work both its danger signal and its food call from the same centre, and the psychology of the impulses differ. If the blackbird makes its disagreeable *chirr-chirring* sound from the same centre as it sings with, the *chirring* may remain utilitarian and the song music. At all events, anyone who has followed the blackbird's song from its rise in spring to its decline in summer may see that it is not speech but music. Nor is it an unpractised spontaneous outburst of feeling. Listen to the first pained strivings of the spring blackbird learning his jump of a fifth. You can hear the diffidence of it, see him hesitate when he has not taken the interval up to pitch. No one could call these preliminary efforts either speech or song; they are deliberately practised exercises. A human whistler can beat them in precision of interval and even in quality of tone, as the bird knows. If you mock a blackbird who has taken his fifth just wrong, with a patch from his last year's song, and are lucky, he will feel foolish, ruffling his feathers and drawing in his neck as a hen does when you stare it out of countenance, or he may fly away in a rage *chirring* at you as he does at the cat. When you live in a garden with blackbirds and hear their daily

progress, after the fifth, the third, then variations on the common chord, with improved tone, flexibility and ease, you cannot help seeing that only as a final consummation do their songs seem unpractised and spontaneous miracles. You can watch the songster keeping a critical eye on his production; if the first attempt does not please him he tries again more carefully. He follows an ideal all the time, tries to sing beautifully, referring his song to an æsthetic or artistic sense, as if he made it after a pattern imagined beforehand, or at least in accordance with some subjective feeling. This is art, the catching of a heavenly music and the guiding of it through physical channels to earth; we cannot listen to his early strivings when he cuts out the channel, and doubt it. His song is not utilitarian, and if emotional it is emotion devoid of earth—clear, heavenly emotion.

We are not so sure as we used to be that bird song is a purely mating phenomenon. The lark sings in January and February and does not mate till March, robins sing in autumn and winter, and thrushes in November. Herbert Spencer* concludes from this that "the singing of birds results merely from an overflow of energy." If a bird moults out of season he sings while the others moult. Caged birds sing longer than wild. This looks as if birdsong, like human art, results from leisure. It is a spending of overflow vitality in the hunt for the ideal. Witchell,† who believes that however birdsong may have originated‡ its final impulse is æsthetic, tells us that

> "A sedge warbler singing at ten o'clock at night reproduced exactly the fast-fading cries of a Chaffinch flying away. This warbler then repeated in succession all the vehement alarm-cries which announce the arrival of a hawk, and continued his song with the single "tell" cries with which the male House Sparrow, watching as sentinel, warns his neighbourhood that the Hawk is very near. Then these sounds ceased. Suddenly the usual song of the Sedge Warbler was resumed. The song of this bird was, in any event, evidence of his acute memory; but might it not have been an intentional picture, in sound, of an incident of bird-life? I submit that there are grounds for supposing the latter view to be correct; and if it should be so, may not all bird song be, to a variable extent, intended to suggest pleasing impressions of surroundings to the objects of the song? Human songs are full of suggestions of surroundings, in which the sounds uttered by creatures are often

* "The Origin of Music" in *Mind* for October, 1890.
† "The Evolution of Bird Song" in *The Zoologist* for 1890, p. 246.
‡ He thinks it developed out of food calls and danger cries.

> imitated in the names of those creatures; and in the songs of birds we find an analogous reproduction of the notes of surrounding animals. May not the purpose of this mimicry be in both cases the same?"

Even if we think Witchell has opened too many probabilities all at once, or generalised too much, still, that a scientific observer could arrive so far, is striking.

We need hardly consider the speech of the animal world, its utilitarian noises. No one will deny that birds have food calls and danger cries; and the danger cries are nearly the same for many varieties of birds or at least intelligible to them. There is something approaching a universal tongue, an esperanto of birdland, for birds have international aims and agree in a sort of reciprocal protection policy, as in the *entente* that combines against the owl and the cat. We set ourselves to see whether primitive speech is music applied to utilitarian ends, or music the development of nature's utilitarian sounds to an artistic end; is speech an outgrowth of musical sounds to communicate meaning, or music a development of speech sounds to give pleasure? Wallaschek gives music, or the emotion relieving function the original place.

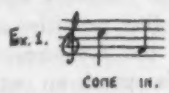
> "The monkey's tones of voice, he tells us, are so distinctly varied, when these animals are on duty as posts or scouts on the flanks or rear, that a person much accustomed to watch their movements will at length fancy that he can understand their signals. Mr. Garner actually succeeded in understanding them, and by catching and reproducing these sounds by means of a phonograph got the apes to do the corresponding action. But this, and so many examples of the animal's *call*, proved that the vocal utterance, originally produced as emotional reflex, has been used later on with . . . a special meaning, *i.e.*, in an intellectual way."

We still prefer music to a megaphone for army orders. As a further argument he shifts over to the other problem and tells that in primitive peoples language lags behind music and gesture in powers of expression; drama dawns with music and action, words came only after; that, in fact, opera is older than drama. Thus speech has grown out of music to give precision and definiteness to meaning already there.

The other problem concerns the objective difference between speech and music. How does read poetry differ from sung poetry? We give up something when we sing; we abandon the inflections of speech

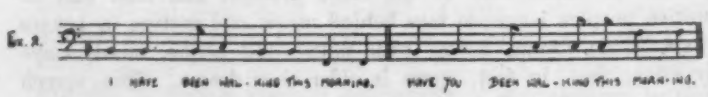
in exchange for the melody of music. A melody can follow the inflections of a spoken poem, and a poem sung to such a melody differs from the read poem only in moving from note to note in jumps instead of by slurring. In a melody we sing the interval of a " third " as two clean, distinct, separated notes; in speech we make the movement from pitch to pitch by a very rapid *portamento;* the spoken " third " is not strictly an *interval*, the voice in going from one note to the other slides through all the intervening pitches. Then, in song we stop on the delimiting pitch we have jumped to; in speaking we do not rest at the limits. The pitch of our speaking voice moves continuously.

We do not need to go very far to discover speech turning into song. When we wish to make our voice carry we tend to give up the *portamento*, and sing it.



" Come in," sings my friend when the noise in the passage is so great I do not hear her speaking, or inflected invitation. In moments of more impatience, or effort to be heard, the drop is a sixth. The same thing happens in street cries. Dr. Carter Blake, as quoted by Wallaschek,* says these are always in minor keys, for which Mr. Joseph Kaines gives a pretty explanation; the street crier " utters his burden in pain "; more likely it is because the inflections of speech are in minor modes. Plainsong, whose scales also, are modal, had the same origin;† there we see the inflections of the voice being converted into musical notes. Both the intonations which we use to mark punctuation and those of pronunciation were copied, or if plainsong melodies arose unselfconsciously, evolved themselves.

‡" Attentive observations on ordinary conversation show us that regular musical intervals involuntarily recur. . . . A bass voice would say:

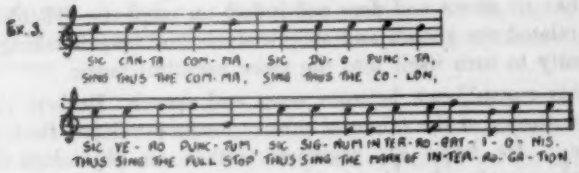


* Wallaschek objects that they are as often in major keys, that only one of Gardiner's seventeen examples is in the minor. They are really in gapped scales.

† H. B. Brigg's *Elements of Plainsong.*
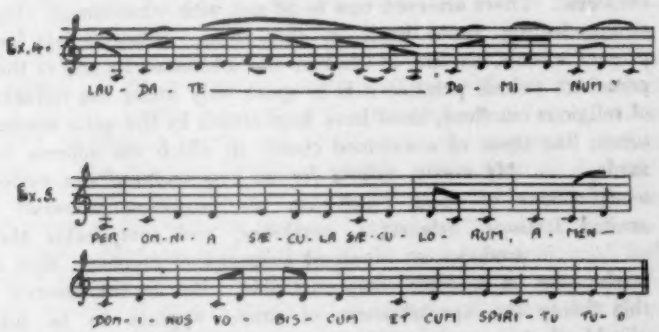
‡ Helmholtz *The Sensation of Tone.* Ellis's translation.

"In the old Romish Church, the Gregorian school had the following rules:



"It is easy to see that they strove to imitate the natural cadences of ordinary speech."

We can watch them following the pronunciation inflections in such phrases as* :—



If we consider how naturally the music goes with the Latin words, and hear how artificial it sounds with English, we realise how intimately these melodies are bound up with the Latin inflections. Folk song, too, is but melodised speech, or rather poem inflection. Mr. Cecil Sharp, speaking on "Folk Music" in Cambridge, on 25th October, 1921, said that folk singers do not realise they are making music, are not conscious of the melody apart from the words; if they forget a song it is because they have forgotten the words; folk song airs are unconscious emanations from, or crystallisations of

* Benedictines of Stanbrook *Grammar of Plainsong*. Readers will remember that in plainsong notation time values are not represented.

the inflections of the words. He also said that characteristic national differences in folk tunes result from characteristic national " accent "; the peculiar Hungarian folk song cadences come from a peculiar cadence in Hungarian speech; French has patter song because its speech has no stress and does not inflect on emphatic syllables. So closely related are speech and song that we find speech taking every opportunity to turn itself into the more beautiful music.

On this resemblance between song and speech, Herbert Spencer bases his theory of the origin of music; music developed from speech inflection. He bases his argument rather on physiological than historical grounds, though history seems in his favour. Anthropological investigations are against him in so far as they have shown that song is probably older than speech. In his article on the " Origin and Function of Music," in *Frazer's Magazine* for October, 1857, Spencer rests his theory on physiology, and tells us:

> " That recitative . . . grew naturally out of the modulations and cadences of strong feeling, we have indeed still current evidence. There are even now to be met with occasions on which strong feeling vents itself in this form. Whoever has been present when a meeting of Quakers was addressed by one of their preachers (whose practice it is to speak only under the influence of religious emotion), must have been struck by the quite unusual tones, like those of a subdued chant, in which the address was made. . . . **If music, taking for its raw material the various modifications of voice which are the physiological result of excited feelings, intensifies, combines, and complicates them* . . . it produces an idealised language of emotion; then its power over us becomes comprehensible. But in the absence of this theory the expressiveness of music appears to be inexplicable."

This is the core of the theory, that music has evolved from the modifications of voice which are the physiological result of excited feelings.

Spencer's theory aroused opposition. It was new. We do not want to believe that the most heavenly of the arts had a common origin with speech in our physiology. Poor mortals, we feel afraid when heaven comes up out of the earth instead of descending from the sky, and cling to the belief that what is divine can come only through an exclusively divine channel. Perhaps not unnaturally, the credit of being Spencer's most deadly enemy belongs to a musical

* My italics.

critic, Mr. Ernest Newman.* His objections are answerable. Let us look at them in order.

> "Stricker in his 'Du Langage et de la musique' has . . . . made out a good case for believing that the organs of speech and the organs of song are controlled by different cerebral spheres."

I believe there is as good a case for believing that different cerebral spheres control the organs of writing and speaking, yet no one would deny that writing is an offshoot from speech. Newman objects that the musician thinks in sound as the literary man thinks in words. It seems unlikely that the literary man does think in words. Many psychologists oppose the idea, and as Mr. Keary† says: "A poet can think his line before he knows of what words it will be made up"; if words are emotional they must be "supplemented by a *something*, by gesture or intonation." This is true of prose writing also. The feeling, or subjective experience of writing or speaking, is not that of putting one word on to another word, but a rush of sound that comes all of a piece. The writer with command of his pen does not normally translate his meaning word by word, he thinks in a stream of sound. If we contrast this native writing with our first attempts in a foreign tongue we realise the momentous difference between merely writing in words and thinking in the sequence of foreign sounds. The musician thinks in sounds which may not include the sound of words, but this is no argument against Spencer, who holds that music is precisely the stream of sound we feel in when there are no words. Newman says further: "No demonstration could deduce a Bach fugue from excited speech." A Bach fugue is founded on a single melody; if melody grows out of speech inflections, it is demonstrated that a Bach fugue can be derived from the intonations of excited speech. This is but another way of contradicting Spencer not another argument against him. Fugue form or any other complex musical form may, or may not, be deducible from inflectional melodies, but this is wholly irrelevant. Spencer does not say it can. The finest cathedral has its origin in the earth, and could never be built if its material were not in the earth; but this does not mean that the imagination of man had no share in determining its form. Next we find a reference to Wallaschek, where he tells us that the words of the most primitive songs are nonsense words.

* *Musical Studies.*

† "Some Thoughts on the Technique of Poetry."—*Fortnightly Review*, 1906.

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* *Musical Studies.*

† " Some Thoughts on the Technique of Poetry."—*Fortnightly Review*, 1906.

> " It is impossible [he says] that in these cases music arose as a direct imitation of the natural accents ready made in speech."

We anticipated this argument. It proves that melody preceded meaningful words, that a meaningful or emotional use of melody preceded the pointing of its specific application in words, and in so far as the question is chronological, is possibly unanswerable; but though Spencer, through not anticipating Newman, does not make the distinction, his theory is not so much chronological as physiological, though even chronologically we can defend it. He states his real position very clearly:

> " Using the word cadence in an unusually extended sense as comprehending all the modifications of voice, we may say that *cadence is the commentary of the emotions upon the propositions of the intellect.*"*

The function of music, is, he thinks, to develop this language of inflection. We may agree that melody, whether as inflection or as song, preceded words. Then, on Spencer's view, the inflected or *portamento* melodies preceded the sung melody, and music has developed from howls and wails, which, being *portamento* cries, are inflections and therefore speech rather than song. At all events, Spencer does not hold that " music arose as a direct imitation of the natural accent ready made in speech," though he avails himself of the justification or analogy which musical history provides. He says that speech is compounded of two elements, the words and the tones in which they are uttered—the signs of ideas and the signs of feeling, and it is from these tones, which he regards not as the " natural accent of words," but as the result of excited feelings—a point he labours—that music derives. He contrasts not so much words and music as inflection and song. Newman hardly considered the real theory Spencer puts forward. Its battle ground should more properly be scientific than musical. But the theory has value for us in proving that music is a natural thing, part of our fundamental constitution, not in any sense arbitrary; it shows that our sense of tonality, of melody, of scale is innate, and intrinsic, that our scales cannot be mere conventions arbitrarily determined by such things as

* His italics.

the construction of primitive pipes*—a curious idea when we come to think of it. It suggests also that the same principles which govern musical melodies, govern the inflections of poetry, since both rely on the same sense of tonality.

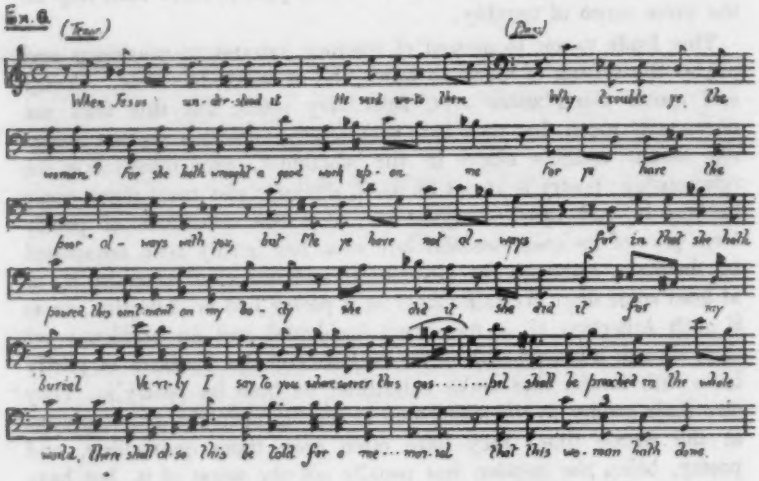
This leads us on to ground of common interest to musicians and poets—the setting of music to words and of words to music. Poetry and music being sister arts, fight very often, but this does not necessarily mean that they hate each other. Poetry's zealous following resent music's share in the squabbles, even disclaiming the relationship; poetry is an art by itself, distinct; why must music come butting in and upset everything? That the inflections of poetry form part of its quintessential loveliness has hardly been recognised by theorists, although the elocutionist and musician recognise it, or at least some do. We talk rather as if poetry had no inflection, or as if such inflection as it has, were incidental and an accident; yet this, though unrecognised, is the real quarrel the partisans of poetry have with music, that music substitutes its tune for poetry's. They owe their grudge to the misfortune of coming upon the sisters always at the wrong time; they have often seen them quarrelling, and poetry, being the gentler, has usually got the worst of it, but have never seen the reconciliation, when music, being the more generous, has given over everything to the words. Even the most unfriendly admit that in Gilbert and Sullivan, the one art has not prejudiced the other; the music has given a soul to the words, the words a body to the music; both poet-humorist and musician were sensitive to the inflections of speech. In the best songs either the musician deifies the poem by forming his melody on inflections native to it, or the poet writes words whose inflections fit the melody, so that the music and the poetry sound in more than harmony, they sing in unison. But the musician may not only follow the characteristic tunes of speech and so make a song of a poem, he may discover the more essentially expressive inflection and crystallise it in his song, perpetuating a finer interpretation, making, as it were, the tones of the inspired reader immortal. Poetry sung well to a good tune is much beautified; it is then emotionalised, song being the expression of more elated feeling than speech.

Lanier† claims a falling fourth as the commonest inflection for the end of a sentence; and it is interesting after reading him, to recollect this falling fourth as the cadence in the recitative of Bach's " Matthew

* Wallaschek *Primitive Music*, p. 157.
† *The Science of English Verse.*

Passion" that most lingers in our memory. Within sixteen consecutive bars we find so many as three :—

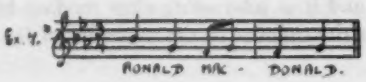
Ex. 6.



Taken from the edition of C. V. Stanford (Stainer and Bell).
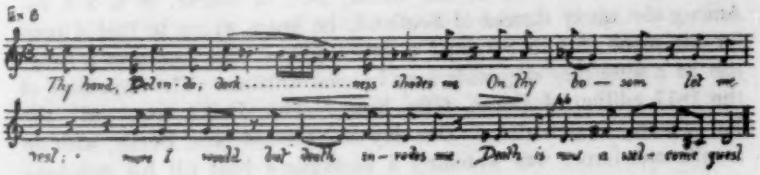
No intonation could be more expressive than "the whole world." But the expressiveness is all the more remarkable when we recollect that Bach wrote the music to German words. The English translation has been very carefully made to fit the music, but even so, it is remarkable that music which follows the most expressive inflection of one tongue can remain expressive in translation—a point in favour of Spencer's theory, for racially the Germans are our cousins. The music of Debussy's "Blessed Damozel," which fits the French translation, sounds inexpressive with the English words, not inexpressive as music, but inexpressive as inflection; it is English sung with a French "accent." Our folk songs sometimes catch a local "accent." I do not think it fanciful to detect a Highland, or is it West of Scotland?—"accent" in "Lizzy Lindsay." This is not the only place I have heard

Ex. 7.



That music can follow the inflections of poetry is not wonderful; but it is significant that music following the inflections of poetry should

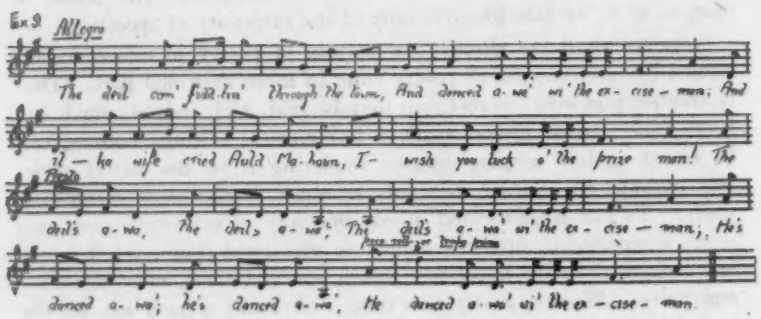
make such lovely melodies as our folk tunes, or, more notably, this music—there is no adjective to describe its loveliness—from Purcell's "Dido and Æneas."



We need hardly comment on these expressive intonations, on the breaking of the voice, the shuddering of it on "darkness," or the inflectional quality we feel where two notes come to a word, on "bosom," "would" and "death." "Welcome" has the most emotional, as it has also the most lovely inflection. The sound of tears is in it; we talk like this only at the extremity of speech.

Here we shall not discuss the setting of poetry to music accompanied by instruments, or poetry sung in more than one part. That is another problem. Something may be said, and, indeed, much has been said, against giving words a full musical setting; nothing can be urged against singing poetry, rendering it in the native style. But perhaps the setting of words to music is the more interesting study. To our sophisticated minds this way of making a new song seems a wonderful, difficult, almost an unnatural thing, yet it is not less natural than the other way, being less ambitious, more primitive and naïve. Writing poetry to a tune is obviously a good way for the poet with an insecure "metrical" technique, to give definite form to his poetic impulse. The tune keeps the form of the poem, the metre, the phrasing, the stanzas, right. A great many poets of Scottish newspapers write with this aid; after the title, they tell us their tune: "(To the tune of 'The Scottish Blue Bells,')," "(To the tune of 'Charlie is my Darling')." These are not freak or acrobatic poets, but humble shoemakers and housemaids. But the poet must have a feeling for the inflectional meaning of his tune, to make a good song thus; and many of the poets who have given us the words for our Scottish national airs, did so with a very sure instinct in using melody as significant inflection. An essential part of Burns' genius as a song writer lay in his appreciation of this. Many of his songs inevitably suggest their melody; we cannot read them without their tune, and this not because we have never heard them save as sung, or that we hear them as songs before we read them as poems. It is not due to mere association; they were, indeed,

written to the melody. The tune forms part of the material of the poem; the poem includes the tune. In place of an inflectional sense when he wrote, the poet had a consciousness of the tune. So skilful is Burns in fitting words to music that we often feel rather as if the music were written to fit the words, but, of course, it is not so. Among the many dances of Scotland, he knew where to find a tune for his mood, for in Scotland a dance played slow becomes a song, just as a song played quickly may become a dance. The annotator of the 1877 edition of Burns, tells how "The Deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman" was written. One day of incessant rain, Burns, with an insufficient force, was watching a smuggler's boat till his colleague exciseman returned with more men; one of the party wished the "Deil" had the absent exciseman for being so slow, and suggested that Burns should indite a song on him. Burns, after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined the party and sang this:

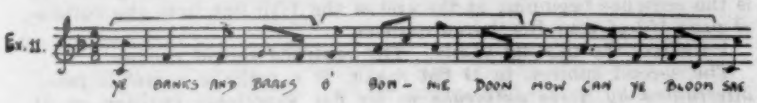


He could not have found a better tune than "The Hemp-dresser" to express the impish, unrestrained jubilation, nor could he have fitted the words better to catch the excited intonations of the music on the right place. Besides a genius for finding the right tune for his sentiment, he seems to have had the genius for finding the right sentiment for his tune. If it is true that the writer of the air of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," James Miller, of Edinburgh, was a man with no music—which is hard to believe—who got the melody by acting on the suggestion, that the way to write a Scottish tune was to amuse oneself with the black notes of the piano, and that Burns offered to write words to the result (and this origin is too picturesque to be lightly put aside), it shows him versatile in this other way. In any case the song shows the most marvellous ingenuity. Though the music suggested the reference, it did not

suggest the words, which Burns adapted from a previous lyric, in its turn a mosaic of older lyrics; but the music and the words fit so well that it needs an effort of our imagination to realise that each arose independently. They feel so inseparable that we tend to overlook the miracle which united them. Yet this was not an out of the way miracle; it is as natural as the going down of the sun. The singer, too, respects the inflectional quality of the tune, and phrases it to bring out the inflections of the words. When played on the violin as a sort of " presto," or at least " allegro " dance we may hear it phrased thus :



It is sung " andante " thus :



The inflection comes on " braes," " Doon," " can," instead of on " of," " how," " ye," as it would if the instrumental phrasing had been kept.

KATHARINE M. WILSON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor of MUSIC AND LETTERS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Beethoven was a wonderful proof-reader, but his handwriting—well, your readers have seen it. My handwriting can be quite as bad as Beethoven's; worse, indeed, for Beethoven's gains clearness by sprawling, whereas mine is cramped, and my interlineations are confused. But my proof-reading is worse still. So I cannot wonder that, at a particularly confused part of the MS. of my article on Beethoven's art-forms a line should have dropped out. If any of your readers have had the patience to wade through my article they deserve that this passage should be made intelligible. It is the sentence beginning at the end of the 17th line from the bottom of page 153 of your Beethoven number.

I italicise the missing words. The sentence should run:—

The second subject, in D flat major, is a pathetic cantabile *twice interrupted by fierce outbreaks in its flat supertonic* (written as D natural to avoid the awkward notation of E double flat).

Two other misreadings of my handwriting have escaped my correction. One is six lines from the bottom of page 135, where I meant to say of the second movement of the A minor quartet that "its trio contains four fantastically *contrasted* themes." No doubt a theme may be fantastically "constructed," as a forked radish may have a head fantastically carved; but such abstruse thoughts were beyond my purpose.

The other misprint is in my notes on the sketch of the finale of the C sharp minor sonata. The footnote on page 258 should obviously be: From this it would seem that the *leaf* was already cut off when the sketch was made.—I remain, yours faithfully,

DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY.

Edinburgh, 25/3/27.

To the Editor of MUSIC AND LETTERS.

DEAR SIR,—I read Sir Hamilton Harty's article on Beethoven's orchestra with interest. The points that he makes are quite beyond discussion. However, there is one point of historical importance that I have not seen mentioned anywhere. As it involves a personal opinion, I send it with some diffidence. But it may be worth recording.

When I started to write my book on "Orchestration," knowing that I should have to turn over many more scores than were likely to figure

in the book, I made up my mind to extend the search so as to ascertain, for my own satisfaction, the answer to this question:

What composer made the greatest advance on his predecessors in the matter of orchestration?

I had an absolutely blank mind as to what would be the answer. In fact, the answer surprised me a good deal. But it was, without a shadow of doubt, Beethoven.—Yours very faithfully,

CECIL FORSYTH.

New York, 9/4/27.

To the Editor of MUSIC AND LETTERS.

SIR,—When Mr. F. Bonavia writes ("The Concerto," Beethoven number of MUSIC AND LETTERS), "Our predecessors sought a rich and luscious tone. Wilhelmj's reputation, for instance, was based on big tone. To-day we want something different—pregnant rather than powerful tone, just as we expect a performance to be charming rather than amazing," I confess I do not quite see how he wishes these remarks to be taken; on the other hand, I fancy I do see, only too plainly, how they are likely to be taken, *e.g.*, that Wilhelmj's only title to consideration was a loud and luscious tone.

Suppose I say "Nelson's reputation rests mainly on his telescope, his blind eye and his missing arm," I should be saying something which, though true, in a sense, was yet essentially false. Wilhelmj's great tone (it was never "luscious") was easy to notice, and, here is the point, *easy to express*. Other features of his playing, of his tone and phrasing, were entirely new and strange; they could, indeed, be felt and appreciated subconsciously, but to express those qualities in so many words involved a mental effort of which few were capable and still fewer willing to make. Hence very little mention of them has come down to us. Yet but for those rare and original qualities, Wilhelmj would never have attained any reputation at all. As a mere noise maker he would certainly never have obtained the unbounded admiration of Liszt, Wagner and Joachim Raff. His loud noises would soon have been forgotten or ignored by the world. As this is merely a protest and not an essay, it is not for me to attempt any analysis of his immense talent. The grandeur of his rendering of the Concerto would surely have "charmed" Beethoven. Can Mr. Bonavia have heard Wilhelmj play?—Yours obediently,

H. P. MORGAN-BROWNE.

Liverpool, 21/4/27.

OBITUARY

SAMUEL LANGFORD.

By an Old Friend.

THE late Samuel Langford (of the *Manchester Guardian*) had a personality that was unusual—perhaps unique—in journalism. Except for his training at the Leipzig Conservatoire, he had no education beyond that of the primary school. He wrote good verse, but the technique of newspaper writing was always a torture to him and he never quite mastered it. But he turned his very limitations to good account, with infinite patience forged a new critical instrument of his own, and slowly forced its acceptance on his public. The supreme distinction of his writing was that it was innocent of tricks—even of those pardonable tricks which lighten the professional writer's toil. Except for passages which often achieved eloquence the writing was inelegant and diffuse. It derived its effect entirely from the sincerity and directness of his thought. Everything he wrote bore the immediate impress of his own mind. He wrote nothing at second hand; always it was his own, the result of processes of thought entirely his own and of a personal judgment that never accepted any conventional standard, however strong its backing. Whether for good or for bad (and it was almost always for good), his writing always had the distinction that comes of complete sincerity. Add an unconquerable idealism and no further explanation is needed of the success that he achieved. There were many good judges who thought him the best critic of a concert in the country, and his detailed criticisms of pianoforte recitals were like nothing else that ever appeared in critical journalism. The wise editor of the *Manchester Guardian* gave him his head and let him write in his own way.

He was a man that everyone would turn to look round at. He was short and thickset, with very heavy features and small, though bright, eyes, which, when he laughed (and he had a very keen sense of humour), would narrow into pin-points. The head was magnificent, with its long, often dishevelled, hair, nobly poised on massive shoulders. Almost from early manhood he had a stiff, square-cut beard, which he wore long. He was one of the best-known figures in Manchester, of whose music he gradually became a sort of Pope. He came of a family that had for hundreds of years been on the land in South Manchester, and there was about him a certain aristocracy of the soil. His people were florists and market gardeners of repute and Samuel Langford never lost his early interest in flowers and horticulture. The front garden of the old cottage in which he lived and died was a thing to remember, especially in Manchester. He was a very good pianist when he was at his best and he played everything and had a very fine Chopin technique. He was also a very good teacher of music until his work as musical critic made it necessary for him to give up teaching, and a very good judge of a voice. Miss Clara Butterworth he discovered and taught. Langford was very fond of philosophical speculation and had he been a readier writer he might have written a fine book on musical æsthetic. As it was, his criticisms of concerts and occasional musical leaders in the *Manchester Guardian* consumed all his literary energies.

He was fond of company, loved good talk, and gave much time to his friends. He was the most tender-hearted and loyal of friends.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Orpheus or The Music of the Future. By W. J. Turner. Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d. net.

The worthiest thing that can be said about a book is that it awakens thought. That places it once and for all among that small number that are worth re-reading. Mr. Turner's "Orpheus" is of that class. There is much in it that is controversial, the thought that it awakens is liable to be antagonistic, the author's generalisations are bald, crude, egotistical, what you will. But the fact remains that the stuff of the book is vital, the thought is fresh, there is a definiteness in the endeavour after truth. After a first reading (the reviewer has indulged in three) this sort of thing still raises itself as the thick box-hedge of a maze: "Music is . . . the imagination of love," and: "The Universe is the imagination of its delight." Such a stringing together of words would be accepted in a poem. In a popular treatise they are felt to be wrongly placed. It is possible that the fault lies not with Mr. Turner but with his readers. Read the book again (it is but a matter of a couple of hours concentration, though the going is not always easy) and those hard dicta may approach comprehension. But should they do so or should they not, we cannot but feel that "Orpheus" has stimulated thought. It probably will not interest Mr. Turner that this is so. We do not expect that it should, for the question has become ours not his. He himself would say that his book, once made, is part of that "death in myriads of lovely forms" of which he tells. Ours, then, as we read, thinking and valuating, is the form of life which is "in creation, the hearing of a new thing." And when, at the end, we come to Mr. Turner's pages on Beethoven, we may not agree with the position he takes up, but we cannot but be sensible of this finely poetic piece of writing, and indebted to its author.

The Unconscious Beethoven. By Ernest Newman. Parsons. 10s. 6d. net.

Beethoven. By W. J. Turner. Benn. 18s. net.

La jeunesse de Beethoven. (1770-1800.) By J. G. Prod'homme. Librairie Delagrave, Paris.

Beethoven's life is remarkably simple in its details. The telling of it calls for no highly-coloured phrases. It was a quite ordinary existence. But the way he lived, the manner of his dealings with commonplace circumstances, his reaction to the generalities of human intercourse and experience, in those there was something altogether unaccustomed, different from the ways of his contemporaries, by turns amusing and arresting to us now. It is the unexpected in Beethoven—and everything is unexpected for the candid student of that life—that still attracts historians. There are some that say the

music should be separate from the man. There are others who feel that only through the man can one reach to anything but a sensual appreciation of the music. There are those who maintain that you can reach the man through the music. Probably there is a part of the truth in all three assertions, and he who would arrive at the whole truth must study what specialists of each school of thought have to say and reach his own conclusion. These three books fit into the second category, overlapping at certain points towards the third. Mr. Newman's account of Beethoven in the first part of his book is excellent, even though it deals rather at length with but one side of the life. In the second part the author changes ground, and having lit upon a significant phrase, which appears with much persistence in Beethoven's music (just as the rising fourth does in Handel), discusses the use made of it and its probable purport. From that he deduces a theory that, subconsciously, Beethoven's mind worked to a preconceived pattern, and that the sketch books show him to be " the man who believes he is exercising his free will " but is " only following a line marked out for him by forces that function too far down in his subconsciousness for him to be aware of them." With this idea Mr. Turner would not agree. His is a more conventional realisation of the fundamental Beethoven, whose life he unfolds, with many quotations from the letters, at great length and somewhat disjointedly. When he is in a good humour Mr. Turner has a habit of saying fine things, and after certain beautiful pages in his " Orpheus " we had expected at least something in the same exalted strain here. There are echoes of that mood in the third part of this book. " He (Beethoven) has indeed revealed to us a New World, but it is a tragic world, a world whose beauty breaks the heart that perceives it." Mr. Turner can wax enthusiastic about the music. M. Prod'homme just drily describes it. His book is admirable but not very interestingly presented. It is well documented.

Liszt, Wagner, and the Princess. By William Wallace. Kegan, Paul and Curwen. 10s. 6d. net.

Whatever Mr. William Wallace writes about he manages to invest with interest. His style is delightfully keen. He is, as far as humankind may be, just to his subjects. In this book he has found a theme that suits him, and on that he has composed a set of amusing variations. Liszt, if only he had been able to manage his life with the certainty he possessed in managing the keyboard, would have been a superman. But his frailty was woman, and even his most fervent disciple will find it impossible to gainsay the fact that Liszt was sadly wrecked, early on in his career, by this fatal fascination. Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein did more with him (and perhaps for him) than her predecessors, and it was her domination that overshadowed the last half of his existence. She guided his every moment, or thought she did. One of her signal failures to influence and warn him was in the case of Wagner, whose predatory nature she soon sensed. Mr. Wallace seems to feel as bitter against Wagner's methods as she. His lack of enthusiasm for Wagner the man is understandable. But the danger of such a *parti pris* can be felt when we read on page 97: " He (Wagner) encouraged Nietzsche's exuberance while appropriating his thoughts. The young Professor of Classical

Philology was a gold mine of knowledge and learning, and Wagner was not the man to throw away the rare opportunity of extracting and minting every ounce—until found out." Wagner would have been a precious fool if he had missed those opportunities. And as for being "found out"! Is there to be no interchange of thought? Do we take out an act of copyright for what little learning we may have amassed?

Franz Liszt. By Guy de Pourtalès. Translated by Eleanor S. Brooks. Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d. net.

This is the English version of the "Vie de Franz Liszt," which was reviewed in these pages in July, 1926. There is nothing to add here to what was then said of the book itself. We are glad to see it in English, for it is the sort of book that should be placed within reach of a large public. Liszt lived a life that was sufficiently filled with interesting and arresting detail to be worth the recounting, all questions of his work as a composer apart. De Pourtalès mentions the technicalities of music but little, and the general reader will find nothing to hinder him there. A short description is given of the tone poems, and it is in such infrequent citations that this translation, which reads fairly evenly, weakens, and it is felt that the translator has a less sure knowledge of music than the author. ". . . l'étonnante suite d'accords majeurs" (p. 261 of the French edition) is quite other than "the astonishing series of major harmonies" (p. 249, English edition). "Succession" for "suite" and "chords" for "accords" would have been better, and would have made the final words of the same sentence clearer in English, where ". . . l'harmonie Wagnérienne" is, quite rightly, "harmony." This English book is well got up and puts the poor paper and print of the original in the shade.

Chopin. By Wakeling Dry. (The music of the masters.) The Bodley Head. 3s. 6d.

There is nothing in Chopin's music that can be fastened to a "programme." The nocturnes, ballads, mazurkas, polonaises, all are full of the expression of sentiment that is generalised and whose application cannot be focused. The events that took place at Nohant, where George Sand spent the summer months with Chopin and Liszt, the hectic life in Paris, the painful experiences in Majorca, these will have supplied material for his compositions, but it is not for the historian to say with exactitude where their influence can be seen. And so Mr. Dry was probably right in setting down the main lines of the life in an introductory table (though it seems strange, in that case, to incorporate a description of the funeral in the text of Chapter XII), and confining himself, as regards the book itself, to a more or less technical description of the works. Unfortunately, there is no tabulated list of compositions, neither is there an index. These omissions make a book, which otherwise would have some use for the music-lover, lose much of its value.

Wagner and Wagenseil. A source of Wagner's opera "Die Meistersinger." By Herbert Thompson. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d. net.

A footnote to musical history. ". . . had they done nothing more than furnish material for the most genial and masterly of all comedy operas, these old Master-singers would have deserved our heartfelt gratitude." So far the author of this pleasant little book. But the fame of having done Wagner that service was something quite other than what the pompous old Master-singers dreamed of. To them music was a task of immense seriousness, and they bound the art in with rules and regulations beside which the teaching of Padre Martini or of Fux seems the veriest licence. Mr. Thompson describes Wagenseils's "Commentatio" which in itself is a detailed description of the guild rules of the Meistersinger. Wagner will probably have known of this book, having met it during the time when with Cornelius's help he was assembling material for the plot of his opera.

Carlo Gesualdo. By Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine. Kegan Paul. 8s. 6d. net.

Mr. Heseltine's study of Gesualdo's music is rich in examples from contemporary sources giving a fair idea to the common reader of the background against which the composer is seen. The effect produced is not, as the author seems to strive to bring about, so much to raise Gesualdo above his fellows as to fix a just place for him in that company. That Gesualdo was a remarkable composer, that his work shows a heightened sensibility more richly displayed than had been usual until he appeared, this is indisputable. That he is of the same stature as Monteverdi, that his accidented progressions are to be considered as a sudden unaccountable burst of genius, these premises cannot be allowed. Mr. Heseltine inclines to press the first claim (about Monteverdi). For the second he is fairer, and the examples he produces, as well as his description of earlier music, show clearly that Gesualdo's is in direct line of influence, that here we are dealing with no insecurely-based "sport." He is of the company of Vicentino, de Rore, di Lasso and Marenzio. This evidence of evolution as against revolution enhances rather than diminishes his worth. In the first part of this book (why no index?) there is a biographical sketch by Mr. Gray. Poor Gesualdo! When Anatole France wrote an exquisite *nouvelle* that had the unhappy events of Gesualdo's married life for subject, the composer came through the ordeal very fairly. Now Mr. Gray fixes on him, and after this pitiless dissection nothing more is left to a kindly imagination. Gesualdo the man no longer exists. His dispersed remains are now contained in a range of small bottles. He is preserved in bitter spirits and henceforth the vulgar may gaze and giggle at these poor privacies.

The English Ayre. By Peter Warlock. Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d. net.

This is a useful, informative little book. It is well written, as might be expected from the author, sufficiently "popular" to appeal to the many, but with the knowledge in it backed by a keen musical intelligence. The book does for the writers of the words and music

of these Ayres what has already been done for the madrigalists, though it is not so extended as Dr. Fellowes' book. In some part it covers the same ground as Chapter XX of " English Madrigal Composers," being an enlargement of Fellowes' discussion of the lutenist composers. As the author says in the Introduction, these Ayres constitute an important part of musical history, and are " a body of English song of which any country at any period . . . might well be proud." It is significant that attention was first paid to the poems of these Ayres. Bullen, in the last decades of the preceding century, published the poems taken from these music books, and the discovery took on a great importance. Not until later did musicians realise the store of beauty which was there. The book ends with a chapter on " Technical Considerations," in which the question of editing is discussed. The author disapproves of the re-barring of the madrigals and songs. It is possible to read a poem without distributing the accents in a purely metrical way. And these composers presupposed a corresponding ability (or common-sense) in those who came to sing their works. There is a chronological table but no index.

Arthur Sullivan. By H. Saxe Wyndham. Kegan Paul and Curwen. 7s. 6d. net.

"Although he actually knew no one, he looked as if he found himself among old friends " (p. 38). Thus far Mrs. Rogers in telling of her first sight of young Sullivan as he suddenly entered a room in which she was. And that sentence may serve for the whole of his life, through which he moved with an astonishing ease and a success so assured and continuous as to become tedious in the recounting. His existence up to 1870—the Mendelssohn scholarship, the Leipzig period, the Crystal Palace (" no mean musical centre of those days ")—seem now to have been but a preparation for the meeting with Gilbert which took place then. Hereafter the partnership was formed, with Richard d'Oyly Carte as producer of the comic operas, and what might be termed the " bread and butter " period set in. For thus it was that the two men were placed in the popular imagination. There were moments of difficulty. The butter turned rancid or the bread became coarse. And there was the final break (Mr. Wyndham is silent as to its cause). But for all that, Gilbert and Sullivan accomplished a remarkable work, the more so when it is realised what a little distance each could go in comprehending the other's art. Really there was much of oil and water in the conjunction of those two intellects. Gilbert definitely said that music meant hardly anything to him. He was, none the less, able to enter into the question of the musical side of the business. (See the admirable letter to Sullivan, quoted on p. 216 where he discourses with much sound horse sense on the difficulties of grand opera. Sullivan had asked him to give up, for a time, comic opera and write him the libretto of " Ivanhoe." Gilbert replies that this is not his province. " The librettist of a grand opera is always swamped in the composer. Anybody . . . can write a good enough libretto for such a purpose." And at the end of the letter: " Where in God's name is your grand opera soprano who can act to be found? ") But it is to be questioned whether Sullivan felt the humour, delicacy, wit of Gilbert's libretti (and for the people of those days these qualities were certainly evident). He just composed the

tunes, worried at times by some rhythm of a jingle, and with a very adequate technique he fashioned the excellent works whose performance filled the Savoy with extatic audiences. In Mr. Saxe Wyndham's book nothing is said about the music beyond the dates of its appearances. For the rest the rather dull events of Sullivan's successful career are catalogued with a praiseworthy enthusiasm.

From a music lover's armchair. By R. W. S. Mendl. Philip Allan. 6s. net.

The author of this entertaining set of musical essays would probably be the last to claim for it any but a modest place. It is a kind of confession of Mr. Mendl's personal predilections. He dislikes Wagner's music, Tschaikovsky has for him much charm, Beethoven holds him fast, light music he says a good word for (not jazz, but what he calls light music of " the better sort," giving examples), and so on. It is not a learned book. In places it is inaccurate. But that does not much matter. The whole little thing reads well, it is hardly downright enough to awaken feelings of strong disagreement. Some of the essays (" Performance," " Values ") are thought-provoking. Mr. Mendl is one of the few writers who can deal with such a subject as " Nature in music " without making it foolish.

The Organ Works of Rheinberger. By Harvey Grace. Novello. 5s. net.

Rheinberger occupies a strong position among organists. His works bear the imprint of a very musicianly mind. They are not great music. But they are more acceptable to the multitude in that their appeal is less stern than J. S. Bach's works, and their tunefulness has much of the beauty of Mendelssohn without his continual " perfection of sweetness." Above all, they are put together by one who knew a great deal about the organ and who thought naturally, as a writer, in terms of that instrument. We may agree with Mr. Grace that " Rheinberger's organ music is so purely musical that all but a handful of it can be played effectively with one stop drawn, or on a pedal piano." Certainly there is in Rheinberger enough contrapuntal device and harmonic beauty to make his works musically self-sufficient. But they lose more, from being taken away from the organ, than works of other men because of that inherent feeling for the possibilities of the instrument which Rheinberger possessed and which caused him to write pure organ music where others were writing music that would do as well for pianoforte duet or two pianofortes. Mr. Grace's book discusses the sonatas at length, lucidly and helpfully. The author, it appears, knows as much about the literature of the organ as the subject of this book knew about the instrument itself.

Sc. G.

Receive it So, being a series of reactions to the incidents of the Theatre and the Music Hall. Basil Maine. (Noel Douglas.) Price 5s.

The words that form the main title of this little book of 95 pages stand in the text as follows: " If there is anyone who can witness this tableau (the singing of the Volga Boat Song at the Blue Bird

Theatre) and not be aware of its true greatness, then I must be so bold as to say that he has not yet arrived at that stage of development which enables him to have greatness thrust upon him without crying out against the burthen of it. Receive it so."

Mr. Maine is very positive. Just what we are to " receive " is not too clear, but apparently it is either greatness or the author's pronouncements. And if we " cry out " we are under-developed. This is a large position for any writer to take up, and the evidences in this book hardly convince us that its author is very securely entrenched there. But he writes with enthusiasm and on contentious points, which are both good fashions of writing, even though (with all respect) the points remain contentious.

The musical " reactions " are What is British Music?, Reinhold von Warlich. The Ballad, Galli-Gurci and Critics and the Amateur.

In the first of these many suggestive things are said, but the subject is too large, we think, for the canvas. Nor are we satisfied that " The Tudor composers did not talk of ' British Music ' " even in the absence of direct evidence that they did. The dramatists and writers like James Howell are full of insistencies upon racial traits. We suspect that the composers did find the point cropping up, though in that wretched age there was no Press crying out for copy, and everybody made music instead of reading about it.

The pages on Galli-Gurci read like careful criticism in a very difficult field.

On Critics and the Amateur we, not unexpectedly, find Mr. Maine specially disposed to fulminate. But it is interesting. We wonder though, if truly, " There can be no denial of the fact that performance is becoming less and less professional," or " Most certain it is, however, that this is the very type of amateur which will claim the attentions of music criticism in the future." Really and truly? At least, if, as the author suggests, " ultimately it may be so happen that the critic will usurp the performers' rights," then there will be some fun in the world.

One of the non-musical " reactions," Rhythm—Black and White, should be read with those we have named, though we were puzzled by " an ordinary vocal recital with its heathenish iteration of forgotten beauty." Oblivion—and iteration?

But the book is interesting and enthusiastic. " Receive it so," in fact.

W. M. M.

The Influence of Music: From Arabic Sources. A lecture delivered before the Musical Association, London, April 27, 1926. By Henry George Farmer, Ph.D. (London: Harold Reeves, 1926.)

Dr. Farmer's lecture forms an interesting contribution to the subject of music in Eastern thought. For several years he has been investigating systematically the Arabic authors from the musical point of view, and he has studied numerous musical manuscripts which had lain unused in libraries A number of papers (most of them in the Journal of the Asiatic Soc.) bear witness to his vast reading. In his " Influence of Music " he collects passages which treat of the intellectual relations of music from the beginning of Arabic literature down to the present time. The Arabic-Islamic authors show them-

selves on this occasion—as on so many others—to be heirs of conceptions formed in earlier epochs. Dr. Farmer also draws up a genealogy of these conceptions which, however, is open to objection: Why, for instance, should the doctrine of the Ethos be derived from the Harmony of the Spheres, and musical therapeutics from the mysticism of numbers?

What is provided on this subject in the texts of different countries varies both regionally and from a point of view of evolution. Once a sufficient quantity of the existing sources becomes available it will be an interesting task to test these variations. All this requires the co-operation of many scholars, and the work which Dr. Farmer is performing in his double capacity of Arabic scholar and musician is therefore all the more to be welcomed. The lecture with which this review is concerned leads one to hope that he will enrich our knowledge of music by the publication and translation of many of the texts of which it contains quotations.

R. L.

* See his Arabian Influence on Musical Theory; Byzantine Musical Instruments in the Ninth Century (Harold Reeves), and Arabic Musical Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (William Reeves). Two new works are announced: Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence, and The Organ of the Ancients from Eastern Sources, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Publishers' names are abbreviated thus:—[J.W.] Joseph Williams, [D.] Deane's Year Book Press, [Ch.] Chester, [M.] Murdoch, [N.] Novello, [Cu.] Curwen.

Pianoforte Music.

Good teaching music comes from Arthur Somervell, whose " Pleasant pastimes " [J.W.] are, like Ivy Herbert's " Little nature studies " [J.W.], suitable for early school terms. Slightly more advanced, though for the same uses, are Clement Spurling's " Our village in winter " [N.], Dunhill's " Sailor dance " [J.W.] and Joseph Wardale's " Three sketches " [J.W.]. It is a good thing that some attention is being paid to music for this purpose, and that good music is being written. The lot of the school music-teacher is no easy one when it comes to finding music sufficiently simple and yet not foolishly childish.

Ivy Herbert's " Romance " [J.W.] does not make much of a figure, being the sort of music that is just charming to play once but not interesting enough to arouse enthusiasm. Two pieces by Hubert Hales, "A bleak church " and " The church with the censing angels " [J.W.] are more nearly real music. They seem to have something definite to talk about. So, too, has Romney Eden in his suite called " Holiday sketches " [M.], which is the best of the bunch. Unfortunately, these short pieces have no style of their own. They take a little from here and a little from there, never producing anything of which one could say " This is what Mr. Eden thinks." Last of all, most refreshingly, there comes a set of four volumes of English country dances [N.], an edition prepared by Cecil Sharpe, primarily for dancers, with descriptions and instructions.

Collections.

From the firm of Gerald Howe there comes an extremely attractive production called " Old English songs, amorous, festive and divine," charmingly got up on good paper, printed in a very fine black and red. The accompaniments by N. C. Suckling are discreet, sometimes a little florid. Would it not have been as well not to omit the key signatures at the beginning of the second and succeeding lines? C. Fox Smith's "A book of shanties " [Methuen] has an introduction in which he discusses questions of provenance and performance. The collection (voice parts only) has a short descriptive note to each song, a feature which it shares with Dr. Terry's " The shanty book, part 2 " [Cu.]. This latter collection has been furnished with accompaniments by the compiler and is suitable for school and general use. Compare the two readings of " The banks of Sacramento " in order to gain an idea of the variants that exist in these songs handed from singer to singer. Negro spirituals are, of their nature, more openly emotional than shanties, as can be seen from " The book of American negro

spirituals " compiled by James Weldon Johnson [Chapman and Hall]. The danger in transporting these songs, sung by the negroes often in parts with their own instinctive harmonisations, is that the arrangements shall be made too sophisticated. On the whole the accompaniments in this volume are free from needless accidentals and do not interrupt the simplicity of the songs.

Instrumental Music.

Eugène Goossens' Phantasy Sextet (op. 35) [Ch.] is one of his most notable works. It has in it a kind of nobility which is not often to be found in his compositions, and is one of his works which will probably survive. He is undoubtedly the possessor of great technical mastery. Kenneth Harding has not yet reached that point, and his Phantasy Quintet [M.] attempts no difficult problems of workmanship. Neither is there any very deep thought in this pleasant little work. It just goes ahead and allows us to hear its fine Welsh theme.

Alec Rowley continues to earn the gratitude of those who have to instruct the young and are faced with the question of providing interesting, but easy, music. " Three little trios " [O.U.P.], for vn., 'cello and pf., are exactly difficult enough for struggling school people, and are rather charmingly tuneful as well. " Phyllis and Corydon " is a string quartet by the same composer [O.U.P.] of a more advanced grade. It has some affinities with Dorothy Howell's Dance for string quartet [O.U.P.] in that both are quite plain-sailing, clearly constructed compositions which should give much pleasure to amateur quartet parties.

Emile Jacques-Dalcroze cannot be called either straightforward or easy. His " Seven dances " [J.W.] were presumably put together more with an eye to choreography than to music. They do not say very much though they would sound pretty. A " Russian cradle song " for violin and pianoforte by David Evans [O.U.P.] says a lot and says it well. This short piece has charm and is well put together. It does not attempt to do more than is reasonable, a fault that Louis Godowsky has not escaped in his " Hebraiscge " for the same instruments [O.U.P.], a piece which might sound clear if played by two virtuosi.

There remain two sets of arrangements of old music. Gerrard Williams has taken certain movements by Bach and made out of them a suite for small orchestra [O.U.P.]. Luckily the wind parts are optional for they are too advanced for the average amateur orchestral society who otherwise would be glad of this suite. F. Boghen has arranged four movements by Alessandro Scarlatti and Francesco Durante for string trio [Casa editrice italiana, Florence], the sort of stuff which needs expert performance to make it effective.

Choral Works, etc.

To find out the practicability of an opera it is necessary at least to see the full-score. So much depends on the thickness of the instrumentation. Be the plot never so good, the tunes never so inspired, the orchestration will make or mar it all. And so we hesitate to say more of Deems Taylor's lyric drama in three acts entitled " The king's henchman " [Fischer, New York] than that it is good, tuneful stuff and is written in a lively manner. It has been performed in New York. Again, with Rutland Boughton's " Queen of Cornwall "

[J.W.], the work has received all the criticism it needs already. This pianoforte score is well printed. From it there can be gathered the reason why, in performance, so little is left of Thomas Hardy—the sounds are beautiful but they cover the words. And yet Boughton is undoubtedly one of the finest composers we have of vocal music. It would seem that the failure here lies not at his door but is inherent in opera. Dennis Arundell in his incidental music to the " Peace " of Aristophanes [O.U.P.] has tried to solve that very problem, and by reducing the accompanying sounds succeeds in getting the lines to speak. This score is amusing, with its lively overture—and also a moving little " prayer." The incidental music to the " Electra " of Sophocles by the same composer [O.U.P.] is more serious music with a lovely " second stasimon." Miss Mary Kelly's " Gipsy Laddie " [D.] is a mimed traditional ballad suitable for village dramatic societies. Its accompaniment has been written by Mr. Fuller Maitland. It would be effective acted out of doors.

Part Songs, etc.

A set of part songs for female voices and strings by Gustav Holst [N.] is the kind of thing that will please amateur choral societies. Singing these songs will have an interest because of the charm of their harmonic device and the unexpected changes of colour. A nearer view is less satisfactory. Holst, in these songs, seems to be working in a heedless way, rather thoughtlessly taking the easiest road. He has by now fashioned a manner of writing that has been effective in many instances. Now he uses that manner instinctively but the effectiveness of it is not always present. With all his great powers and justified prestige he gives the impression (it is probably but a temporary phase) of resting on his oars, content to echo old enthusiams and inspirations. But after all, these little part-songs are only light things, and as such they have a charm, and two of them, " Love on my heart " and " When first we met," something more. Compared with Elgar's " Reveille " [N.], for S.A.T.B. unaccompanied, they are less pretentious though they lack the mastery that is to be seen in this setting of Bret Harte. In his way Alec Rowley is able to do as adequately what he wants as either Holst or Elgar. It must be owned that he does not seem to want to do much. " Sailing " and " The policeman " [N.] are suitable as regards difficulty for school use, but not very inspiring for children to work at. And it must be realised that music chosen for this purpose must stand the test. Only the best can still be liked at the end of a term's grind.

Under the editorship of H. B. Collins there have appeared a number of motets by Byrd, Tallis, Peter Phillips (an English 17th century composer, lived much abroad, appears in Fitzwilliam virginal book) and Christopher Tye, all good material for church uses. What Mr. Collins' editing consists in it is not possible to say without reference to originals. But these publications have the appearance of doing no violence to the music, and are clearly printed.

Songs.

Dr. Somervell has earned our eternal gratitude for having brought into being a book of seventeen songs by Purcell [N.] which he has arranged with pianoforte accompaniment. From among the mass of songs which he has edited for the forthcoming volume of the Purcell

Society Dr. Somervell has chosen these seventeen lovely things, strange and beautiful examples of Purcell's genius. A long article might be written about these few songs, so varied are they. Singers must possess this volume. In it will be found more of interest than in seventeen volumes from other pens.

The Duetti da Camera [J.W.] which J. A. Fuller Maitland has edited and arranged in two volumes are full of good things. There are chamber duets by Steffani, a master of that form, Handel, who learnt much from him, Thomas Attwood Arne, who tried to follow the Italians but succeeded instead in being slightly angular and rather more personal. There is Stradella's " Salamandra " and a beautiful " Sia pur sonno di morte " by Alessandro Scarlatti. These among many curious and charming examples.

The songs of Armstrong Gibbs can be characterised by the same adjectives. His choice of words—Walter de la Mare and James Stephens—assures those same qualities of unwontedness and charm. Some of these songs [Cu.] form part of the fairy play called " Crossings " which he and de la Mare did many years ago. Then there is "Araby," " The Wanderer " and, loveliest of all for the delicate perfection of words mated to very sensitive music, " Take heed, young heart." These songs are among the best that have been fashioned by a native composer during the past decade.

Henry Cowell has set fairly adequately a remarkable poem " Sleep into growth in my measureless waste " by John O. Varian [Cu.]. Singable songs are those of Malcolm Davidson (" Under the greenwood tree "), Thomas Dunhill (" To the queen of heaven ") and Martin Shaw (" Make we merry ") [all Cu.]. Arnold Bax has set Thomas Hardy's " On the bridge " [M.], all very highly coloured, with some curious echoes of Stanford in the voice part (" Perhaps that soldier's fighting In a land that's far away "), while the pianoforte does things that belong to a later date. Gwynn Williams is more content than Bax with simplicity. In " Penillion " [Cu.] he takes Welsh airs, starts them going in the pianoforte part and then superimposes on them a descant. Descants are all very well but are liable to degenerate into a mere meaningless decorative effect. This composer does not manage to evade that pitfall. His " Fairies " [Cu.] is better, just plain and simple. Francesco Ticciati's " The Moon " [Cu.] is a setting of W. H. Davies' poem which should sing well, given a good accompanist.

To the words of Charles Williams' " Over this house a star shines in the heavens high " Hubert J. Foss has put some delicate music. The idea is a pretty one, for " this house " is Amen House, the town house of the Oxford University Press. One is apt to forget that stars shine in city as well as country. Other publishing houses might be induced to look out of their windows of nights. And if, as a result, they could turn out anything as pleasant as Messrs. Williams and Foss have done, so much the better.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

Rivista Musicale. December, 1926.

Sig. Torrefranca continues his study of "The Origins of the Mozartian Style" (see Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, 1921, and Vol. XXXIII, No. 3, 1926). His thesis is that Mozart owed a large debt to the influence of Italian music and technique of composition. In this article he examines the influence of Boccherini and of Campioni. Boccherini was the violoncellist and composer (born Lucca, 1743, died Madrid, 1805) and pupil of Vannucci. Campioni was at work in Florence between 1764 and 1780, and his works were printed in London (where they were extremely popular) and Amsterdam. Sig. Fara continues his exhaustive article on the genesis of polyphony and its first forms. His researches have led him to write thus of the Greeks. "Either we must say that the æsthetic sense of the Greeks was contained in melody, or we must accept the theory of a Greek polyphony. To attribute to the Greeks a way of hearing which so coloured the music as to make it seem to possess a harmony that was not there seems to me the kind of proposition serious minded people cannot entertain. . . . And then if they were capable of imagining this harmony why should they not have practised it?" Sig. Frati writes on Attilio Ottavio Ariosti, the composer who worked much in England and was once thought to be the author of the first act of "Muzeo Scaevola," the rivalry-opera which Handel was persuaded to take part in with Bononcini and Mattei. M. Tiersot gives an interesting set of Letters from Rossini. Sig. Desderi has a descriptive article on Max Reger's instrumental chamber music, and Sig. Pannain writes similarly about Franco Alfano's violoncello sonata.

De Muziek.

This is a new musical monthly published in Amsterdam. The editors are Heer Paul F. Sanders and Heer Willem Pijper, the latter already known in this country as one of Holland's foremost modern composers. The review is well printed on good paper. Besides articles by Dutch and foreign writers, there are notices of musical activities in Holland and abroad, reviews of books and music, and lists of new publications.

No. I. October, 1926.

Heer Pijper writes on "Problems of Tonality." He differentiates between modern music (up to "Verklärte Nacht") that is "still called music" by those who are influenced by a classical outlook, and the more modern music such as Milhaud's "Soirées de Pétrograde," Stravinsky's Octet and von Webern's Orchesterstüke. He investigates the question of tonality, by which he means that aspect of modern usage which appears to be separated from traditions of harmonic progression. Heer Sanders contributes an article on music as accompaniment to the stage. He describes Alex. de Jong's music to "De gele mantel," which to him is some of the most successful of its kind produced in these times. Dr. Prunières has a scholarly paper on "Robin des Bois" and "Freischütz" in Paris, tracing the three

versions of Weber's opera as given in that city. In 1824 Castil-Blaze produced "Robin des Bois," which was "Freischütz," with text and music both botched. In 1829 the German von Röckel gave a slightly more truthful performance of "Freischütz" itself. And in 1841 Berlios set the spoken dialogue to recitative and composed a ballet on tunes from "Oberon," "Preciosa" and the "Aufforderung zum Tanz." Prof. Dr. Sandberger, of Munich, writes a considered study of Orlando di Lasso and his times. Heer Vermeulen has a descriptive article on a young composer, Ernest Levy. This article could well have done with some musical illustrations.

No. II. November, 1926.

Dr. Sanberger continues his researches into the cultural influences of Orlando di Lasso's time, and Heer Pijper provides a second part to his article on tonality. M. van den Borren, of Brussels, writes an interesting, rather superficial little note on bells and bell-playing, tracing the influence of bell music in compositions such as Purcell's "Bell anthem," Bach's "Schlage, doch," and so forth. Heer Stips, of Amsterdam, has something to say on State subsidies. An article on this question in English would deal with the question of whether or not we are to have such State aid. In Holland they already have it for their orchestras, and Heer Stips discusses the relative amounts granted to the different bodies, and what is being done with the money.

No. III. December, 1926.

M. André Coeuroy writes on the renaissance of French musicology, describing what has been done since the beginning of the century to edit and publish old music. Dr. Pisk, of Vienna, contributes a short, interesting article on the present state of Operettas, distinguishing between (1) *Ausstattungsoperette*, the large spectacular operetta nearly allied to the revue; (2) *Possenoperette*, which is practically the same as musical comedy; and (3) *Kammeroperette*, "a product of these times, made use of by small bands of players, given in small theatres." Unfortunately, no names of modern operettas are given. Dr. Sandberger continues his article on Orlando di Lasso.

No. IV. January, 1927.

Heer Vermeulen reviews Dr. Prunières book on Monteverdi, and by comparing the significance of Monteverdi's revolution with what Erik Satie has done lately comes to the conclusion (very wisely) that there is no comparison, but that we must always keep our minds open to the probable importance of present-day happenings. Heer Pijper contributes a reasoned enquiry into the present position of Wagner as an influence in music. Dr. Sandberger concludes "Orlando di Lasso."

No. V. February, 1927.

Heer Sanders has a paper on "Children's Concerts." He urges that the time has come to stop making up programmes for children in an indiscriminate fashion, that programmes are generally too long and too varied, that we have had enough of experimenting on the young hearers, and that the time has come to work out some definite plan. Dr. Erich Steinhard, of Prague, writes a descriptive notice of Alban Berg's opera "Wozzeck" occasioned by the recent performance there. There is an interesting article by M. de la Laurencie on Jean Baptiste Besard, the seventeenth century lutenist and composer of Besançon.

No. VI. March, 1927.

The number is given over to Beethoven. There are articles by Dr. Weissmann (on what Beethoven has bequeathed to later generations), by Heer Schäfer (a general article), and by M. Prod'homme (the symphonies).

No. VII. April, 1927.

Musical historians will be interested in M. Milhaud's tale of his collaboration with the poet-ambassador, Paul Claudel, whose work he set in "Protée," the Oresteia, "L'homme et son désir," &c. As pendant to this there is an article by M. Paul Collaer, of Brussels, on Milhaud's "Les malheurs d'Orphée."

Il Pianoforte. December, 1926.

Sig. Mario Labroca, the young Italian composer, whose string quartet was heard in London some months ago, writes on "Struggles and Victories of Modern Music," a history of past battles and an enquiry into present methods. Signora Melanie Prelinger publishes some letters of Ferrucio Busoni and gives reminiscences of the composer, a well-written and illuminating article.

January, 1927.

Sig. Pannain has a critical article on the theory of Expressionism in music, a philosophical study which would have been made more clear by some musical examples. The writer is antagonistic to this "expressionism," which he describes as an attempt to put into musical sounds the chaotic feelings of modern humanity. Sig. Luigi Perrachio writes on "Thematic Development," and advises the composers of the future to have done with the old methods of "working out." Sig. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, the composer, discourses interestingly on Stravinsky's "Les noces," which to him is an admirable work but one whose influence is not to be far-reaching.

April, 1927.

An amusing article by Sig. Attilio Cimbro on "Reminiscences in Music" traces the opening bars of "Tristan" back through Liszt, to Spohr and thence to Mozart. Sig. Guido M. Gatti has a short notice on Debussy's "Mosieur Croche."

Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft. March, 1927.

Herr Wilhelm Hitzig (whose Beethoven articles in "Der Bär" were noticed in the last number of MUSIC AND LETTERS) has a fully documented article on Beethoven's letters to Gottfried Christoph Härtel. Herr Moritz Bauer, of Frankfurt, writes on "Problems of Form in Late Beethoven," in which Beethoven's use of fugue-form receives special attention. Herr Josef Braunstein, author of a book on the Leonora overtures, brings into question certain of Herr Lutge's assertions (contained in "Der Bär," 1927) as to the so-called new Leonora number 2. Braunstein's theory is that the "new" version is merely one shortened for purposes of the stage. Herr Alfred Heuss writes on Beethoven's methods in orchestral crescendo.

April, 1927.

Herr Berthold Kitzig elucidates some letters of Carl Heinrich Graun. Herr August Rosenthal, of Vienna, contributes an article on "Canon

and fugue in C. M. von Weber's *Jugendmesse*," showing the influences which came to Weber from his master Michael Haydn. There is a catalogue compiled by Herr Robert Haas of new acquisitions in the music collections of the Vienna Nationalbibliothek.

Musikblätter des Anbruch. March, 1927.

This number is devoted in a great part to Beethoven. After laudatory articles by Hugo von Hofmannstahl and Dr. Paul Stefan, there comes an interesting discussion by Herr Erwin Stein of the philosophic principles that underlie Beethoven's music and their effect upon Schönberg. Dr. Adolf Aber describes Krenek's new opera-revue "Jonny (*sic*) spielt auf."

Modern Music. December, 1926.

M. Boris de Schloezer (Paris) writes on "The Operatic Paradox." Since Wagner, despite Mussorgsky's "Boris" and Debussy's "Pelléas," opera has stood still. Opera is bound "within the matrix of drama," and directly the composer starts to deal with dramatic action he sacrifices the musical side of a work. The way to solve the problem may be "to break all bonds between the music and the drama, and to establish them each on a different basis," a method which, we gather, has been followed in Hindemith's "Cardillac." Herr Wellesz (Vienna) discusses the question of opera from a more objective standpoint, describing the latest operatic efforts of modern composers.

Sc. G.

REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

The following list contains a selection of recent books on music. The place of publication has not been added to the publisher's name if the former is the capital of the country or the latter is very well known, and the date of publication unless otherwise stated, is 1927. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price mentioned is that at which the cheapest edition can, or could, be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange £1 is roughly equivalent to 120 French francs (fr.); to 25 Swiss francs (Fr.); to 20 German marks (M.); to 90 Italian lire (L.); to 12 Dutch florins (fl.); to 28 Spanish pesetas (ptas.); and to 18 Swedish or Norwegian Krone (kr., Kr.).

Aesthetics. Benz, W.: *Das Ethos in der Musik.* pp. 51. W. Gerstung: Offenbach a. M., 1926. 2 M. 50.

Harburger, W.: *Form und Ausdrucksmittel in der Musik.* pp. 224. J. Englehorns Nachf.: Stuttgart, 1926. 5 M.

Mersmann, H.: *Angewandte Musikästhetik.* pp. xv. 752. M. Hesse: Berlin, 1926. 17 M.

American Music. Finck, H. T.: *My Adventures in the Golden Age of Music.* illus. pp. xvi. 458. Funk and Wagnalls: New York and London, 1926. 21/–.

American Music. *See* also under **Opera.**

Analysis. Spalding, W. R.: *Manuel d'analyse musicale.* pp. 416. Payot. 30 fr.

Appreciation. Field, Jessie: *Thoughts on Listening.* pp. 91. Murdoch. 1926. 2/–.

Keith, Alice: *Listening in on the Great Masters.* A course in music appreciation . . . By A. Keith, in collaboration with Arthur Shepherd. pp. vi. iii. 122. C. C. Burchard and Co.: Boston; Herman Darewski: London, 1926.

Bach. Keller, G.: *Johann Sebastian Bach.* illus. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague, 1926. 3 fl. 75. [Dl. 2 of the series "Beroemde Musici."]

Perrachio, L.: *G. S. Bach: il Clavicembalo ben temperato.* Bottega di Poesia: Milan, 1926.

Bach, Johann Christian. Schökel, H. P.: *Johann Christian Bach und die Instrumentalmusik seiner Zeit.* G. Kallmeyer: Wolfenbüttel, 1926. [A dissertation? Reviewed in the "Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft" for Dec., 1926.]

Beethoven. *Der Bär.* Jahrbuch von Breitkopf & Härtel. [No. 4.] 1927. illus. pp. v. 175. Breitkopf. 6 M. [A special Beethoven number.]

Bartels, B.: *L. van Beethoven.* illus. pp. 386. F. Borgmeyer: Hildesheim. 7 M.

Beethoven-Almanach der Deutschen Musikbücherei. G. Bosse: Regensburg. 6 M. [Contains articles by G. Adler, H. J. Moser, L. Schiedermair, K. Kobald, A. Sandberger, A. Schering, H. Abert and other authorities.]

Beethoven. Ein Notierungsbuch. (Nr. F. 91 der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.) Vollständig herausgegeben und mit Anmerkungen versehen von K. L. Mikulicz. Breitkopf.

Beethoven Letters in America. Facsimiles with commentary by O. G. Sonneck. pp. xxix. 213. Beethoven-Association: New York; Hawkes: London. 25/–.

Behrend, W.: *Ludwig van Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas.* Trans. from the Danish by I. Lund. illus. pp. xiv. 199. Dent. 6/–.

Bekker, P.: *Beethoven.* [37th-38th Thousand.] pp. vi. 623. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 14 M.

Bethge, E. H.: *Beethoven.* Volks-Feierstunde in dramatischen Szenen, Vortragsdichtungen, Lebensbildern und Dokumenten. pp. 79. E. Bloch: Berlin. 3 M.

Braunstein, J: *Beethovens Leonoren-Ouverturen.* Eine historisch-stilkritische Untersuchung. pp. vii. 160. Breitkopf. 6 M.

Correspondance de Beethoven. Traduction, introduction et notes de J. Chantavoine. pp. 340. Calmann-Lévy. 9 fr.

Couturier, L.: *Ludwig van Beethoven.* [A free trans. of the work by T. Frimmel.] illus. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague, 1926. 3 fl. 75. [Dl. 1 of the series "Beroemde Musici."]

Dworschak, F.: *Ludwig van Beethovens Aufenthalt zu Gneixendorf.* Kremser Denkschrift zu des Meisters 100. Todestage. illus. pp. 16. P. Oesterreicher: Krems. 50 Groschen.

Fischer, B.: *Die achte Symphonie.* Eine Beethoven-Novelle. G. Bosse: Regensburg. 1 M.

Gebhardt, Florentine: *Beethoven-Gedächtnisfeiern.* 1. Im Rahmen der Schule. 2. Im Rahmen des Eltern- oder Volksabends. pp. 46. Kribe-Verlag: Berlin. 1 M.

Grace, H.: *Ludwig van Beethoven.* pp. xi. 326. Kegan Paul; Curwen. 7/6.

Halm, A.: *Beethoven.* pp. iii. 336. M. Hesse: Berlin. 6 M.

Hevesy, A. de: *Beethoven the Man.* Trans. by F. S. Flint. illus. pp. 223. Faber and Gwyer. 7/6.

Kobald, K.: *Beethoven. Seine Beziehungen zu Wiens Kunst und Kultur, Gesellschaft und Landschaft.* illus. pp. 434. Amalthea - Verlag. 7 M. [Amalthea-Bücherei. Bd. 49.]

Levien, J. M.: *Beethoven and the Philharmonic Society.* With an introduction by Alexander C. Mackenzie. pp. 29. Novello. 1/–.

L. van Beethoven: Seine an den Verlag von Hoffmeister und Kühnel, später C. F. Peters, Leipzig, gerichteten Briefe. Verzeichnis der in der Edition Peters erschienenen Werke. pp. 58. Peters. 1 M. 20.

Macchi, G.; *Beethoven e le sue nove sinfonie.* Note e chiarimenti a guida dell' uditore. pp. 64. Libreria Editrice Milanese: Milan, 1926. 5 L.

Newman, E.: *The Unconscious Beethoven.* An essay in musical psychology. pp. 153. L. Parsons. 10/6.

Nohl, W.: *Beethoven. Geschichten und Anekdoten.* pp. 160. Union Zweigniederl: Berlin. 1 M. 50.

Nohl, W.: *Goethe und Beethoven.* G. Bosse: Regensburg. 1 M.

Nohl, W.: *Ludwig van Beethoven als Mensch und Musiker im täglichen Leben.* [2nd enlarged and illustrated edition.] pp. 186. C. Grüninger Nachf.: Stuttgart. 3 M. 60.

Nohl, W.: *Ludwig van Beethoven. Aus seinem Leben und Wirken.* illus. pp. 135. M. Galle: Berlin. 5 M.

Orel, A.: *Beethoven.* pp. 212. Oesterreichischer Bundesverlag: Vienna. 3 M. 70.

Prod'homme, J. G., *ed.*: *Beethoven, raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu.* Lettres, mémoires, etc., réunis et traduits par J. G. Prod'homme. pp. 263. Librairie Stock.

Prod'homme, J. G.: *La Jeunesse de Beethoven,* 1770-1800. illus. pp. 384. Delagrave. 40 fr. [A reissue. First published in 1921.]

Prod'homme, J. G.: *Les Symphonies de Beethoven.* [10th ed., revised.] pp. xiv. 492. Delagrave, 1926. [First published in 1906].

Rolland, R.: *Vie de Beethoven.* [Illustrated edition.] Hachette. 60 fr.

Rolland, R.: *Beethoven.* [Translated by L. Langnese-Huc. Illustrated edition. 9th-10th Thousand.] pp. 149. Rotapfel-Verlag: Zürich. 7 M. 20.

Schmitz, A.: *Das romantische Beethoven-Bild.* Darstellung, Kritik und Berichtigung. F. Dümmlers Verlag: Berlin. 8 M.

Sonneck, O. G., *ed.*: *Beethoven. Impressions of Contemporaries.* illus. pp. vii. 231. G. Schirmer: New York, 1926. 12/6.

Sonneck, O. G.: *The Riddle of the Immortal Beloved.* A supplement to Thayer's "Life of Beethoven." pp. 67. G. Schirmer: New York.

Steinitzer, M.: *Beethoven.* pp. 132. Reclam. 80 pf. [Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek No. 1180/1181. Replaces the vol. in this series by L. Nohl.]

Turner, W. J.: *Beethoven: the search for reality.* illus. pp. 343. Benn. 18/-.

Unger, M.: *Beethovens Handschrift.* illus. pp. 32. pl. 8. Beethovenhaus: Bonn, 1926. 5 M. [4. Veröffentlichung des Beethovenhauses. Obtainable through Simrock.]

Unger, W.: *Beethovens Vermächtnis.* Ein Buch der Einkehr, der Wiedergeburt. Sieger - Verlag: Cologne. 3 M. 50.

Wagner, R.: *Beethoven.* Mit einem Nachwort von Wolfgang Golther. pp. 91. Reclam. 40 pf. [Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek No. 6750.]

Wagner-Schönkirch, H. and Langer, J.: *Beethoven.* Sein Leben und Schaffen volkstümlich dargestellt, mit einem musikalischen Anhang. illus. pp. 104. Deutsche Verlag für Jugend: Vienna. 3 M. 25.

Watzlik, H.: *Adlereinsam.* Erzählungen um Beethoven. G. Bosse: Regensburg. 1 M.

Worbs, E.: *Beethoven. Novellen und Verse aus seinem Mythos.* G. Bosse: Regensburg. 1 M.

Berlioz. Boschot, A.: *Le Faust de Berlioz.* pp. 106. Librairie de France. 15 fr.

Prod'homme, J. G.: *Hector Berlioz, 1803-1869, sa vie et ses œuvres.* [3rd ed., revised.] pp. viii. 327 Delagrave. [First published in 1905.]

Bertati. Rolandi, U.: *Il Libretista del "Matrimonio segreto," Giovanni Bertati.* C. Reali: Trieste, 1926. 6 L. [Bertati was also the author of the

libretto on which Da Ponte based his text for Mozart's "Don Giovanni."]

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Schmidt-Phiseldeck, K.: *Musikalienkatalogisierung.* Ein Beitrag zur Lösung ihrer Probleme. pp. 44. Breitkopf, 1926. 3 M.

Biography. Crowest, F. J.: *The Great Tone-Poets.* Short memoirs of the greater musical composers. [New illus. ed.] pp. 391. G. T. Foulis 6/–. [First published in 1874.]

Riehl, W. H.: *Musikalische Charakterköpfe.* Ein kunstgeschichtliche Skizzenbuch. Bd. 1. [9th ed.] pp. xvi. 400. Cotta: Stuttgart. 5 M. 50. [First published in 1853.]

Brahms. *See* under **Schumann,** Clara.

Bruckner. Gräflinger, F.: *Anton Bruckner.* Leben und Schaffen. illus. pp. iv. 384. M. Hesse: Berlin. 10 M.

Schwebsch, E.: *Anton Bruckner.* Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis von Entwickelungen in der Musik. [2nd enlarged ed.] pp. vii. 335. Bärenreiter-Verlag: Augsburg. 3 M. [First published in 1923.]

Wickenhauser, R.: *Anton Bruckners Symphonien.* Ihr Werden und Wesen. 3 Bd. Reclam. Each 80 pf. [Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek No. 6717-18, 6725-26, 6735-36. Bd. 3 also discusses the "Te Deum."]

Burmester. Burmester, Willy: *Fünfzig Jahre Künstlerleben.* illus. pp. 215. A. Scherl: Berlin, 1926. 3 M. 75. [Burmester is the well-known German violinist, born in 1869.]

Byzantine Music. Wellesz, E.: *Byzantinische Musik.* pp. 96. F. Hirt: Breslau. 3 M. 50.

Chopin. Pourtalès, G. de: *Chopin, ou le poète.* pp. 256. Nouvelle Revue Française. 12 fr.

Vuillermoz, E.: *La Vie amoureuse de Chopin.* pp. 184. Flammarion. 9 fr.

Wodzinski, *Count*: *Les Trois Romans de Frédéric Chopin.* [8th ed.] pp. 342. Calmann-Lévy. 9 fr. [First published in 1886. Deals mainly with Chopin's relations with Constantia Gladkowska, Marie Wodzinska and George Sand.]

Choral Music. Buck, R.: *Wegweiser durch die Männerchorliteratur.* pp. 148. W. Limpert: Dresden, 1926. 2 M.

Ochs, S.: *Der deutsche Gesangverein für gemischten Chor.* Tl. 3. pp. 176. M. Hesse: Berlin, 1926. 3 M. 50. [This part deals with the performance of choral works by Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner.]

Chorale. Schering, A.: *Die metrisch-rhythmische Grundgestalt unserer Choralmelodien.* pp. 60. Kistner and Siegel. 2 M. [A reissue, without alteration, of the 1924 ed.]

Church Music. Stewart, *Rev.* G. W.: *Music in Church Worship*: being the Baird Lecture for 1926. pp. vii. 267. Hodder & Stoughton. 10/6.

Coleridge-Taylor. Sayers, W. C. B.: *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Musician: his life and letters.* [2nd ed., revised.] illus. pp. xv. 331. Augener. 15/–. [First published in 1915.]

Colour Music. Klein, A. B.: *Colour-Music, the Art of Light.* illus. pp. xvi. 287. Crosby Lockwood, 1926. 36/–.

Community Music. Jöde, F., *ed*: *Musikdienst am Volk.* Ein Querschnitt in Dokumenten. pp. 133. G. Kallmeyer: Wolfenbüttel. 4 M. 50.

Composition. Roth, H.: *Elemente der Stimmführung.* Heft 1: Ein- und Zweistimmigkeit. pp. 132. C. Grüninger Nachf.: Stuttgart, 1926. 4 M. 80.

Concerto. Schering, A.: *Geschichte des Instrumentalkonzerts bis auf die Gegenwart.* [2nd ed., with appendices.] pp. viii. 235. Breitkopf. 4 M. 50. [The standard work, first published in 1905.]

Concerts. Meadmore, W. S.: *The Story of a Thousand Concerts* [at South Place], Feb. 20, 1887-Feb., 1927. Together with a list of works performed and the names of artists who have appeared. pp. 58. F. A. Hawkins: London (13, Thurlow Pk. Rd., S.E.21). 1/–.

Counterpoint. Jadassohn, S.: *Lehrbuch des einfachen, doppelten, drei- und vierfachen Kontrapunkts.* [7th ed.] pp. viii. 131. Breitkopf, 1926. 3 M.

Pearce, C. W.: *Student's Counterpoint.* [11th ed.] pp. xx. 93. Schirmer: New York, 1926.

Czech Music. Nettl, P.: *Beiträge zur böhmischen und mährischen Musikgeschichte.* pp. iii. 91. R. M. Rohrer: Brünn. 5 M.

Debussy. Arconada, M.: *En torno a Debussy.* The Author: Madrid, 1926. 5 ptas.

Debussy, C.: *Monsieur Croche, antidilettante.* 3e édition. pp. 209. Nouvelle Revue Française, 1926. 12 fr. 60. [A cheaper edition of the collection of essays first published in 1921.]

Lettres de Claude Debussy à son éditeur. Publiés par Jacques Durand. A. Durand et fils. 15 fr.

Santen, R. van: *Debussy.* illus. pp. 115. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague,

1926. 3 fl. 75. [Dl. 4 of the series "Beroemde musici."]

Vallas, L.: *Debussy*. pp. 192. Plon. 12 fr.

Vallas, L.: *Les Idées de Claude Debussy*. Librairie de France. 12 fr.

De Koven. De Koven, Anna F.: *A Musician* [Reginald de Koven] *and his Wife*. illus. pp. viii. 259. Harper & Bros.: New York and London, 1926. 5$.

Dictionaries. Brenet, M.: *Dictionnaire pratique et historique de la musique*. pp. 490. A. Colin, 1926. 44 fr.

Friedrichs, K.: *Musikfremdwörterbuch*. Kurze Erklärung musikalischer Kunstausdrücke und Zeichen. pp. 56. Hachmeister & Thal: Leipzig. 70 pf.

Illustriertes Musik-Lexicon. [By F. Blume, R. Gerber, H. Hoffmann, and others. Edited by Hermann Abert.] pp. 542. J. Engelhorns Nachf.: Stuttgart. 48 M.

Litterscheid, F.: *Musikalische Kunstausdrücke*. [Revised by C. Knayer. 13th thousand.] pp. 80. C. Grüninger Nachf.: Stuttgart. 60 pf.

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Education. Bucke, Lilian E.: *Music in the Intermediate Forms*. pp. 46. Milford. 3/6.

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C.B.O.

The notes on Pianoplayer and Gramophone records have been unavoidably postponed.

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